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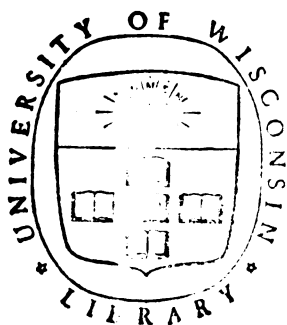


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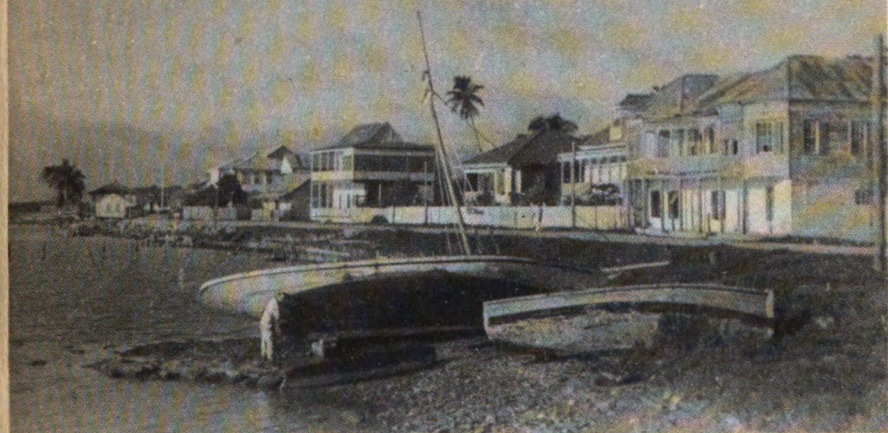




*COLONIAL ANNUAL REPORTS*

# British Honduras 1948

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**THE SERIES OF COLONIAL ANNUAL REPORTS** which was re-introduced for the year 1946 (after suspension in 1940) is being continued with those relating to 1948.

It is anticipated that the Colonies and Protectorates for which 1948 Reports are being published will, with some additions, be the same as for the previous year (see list on cover page 3).

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# ANNUAL REPORT ON BRITISH HONDURAS FOR THE YEAR 1948.

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## General Review

It is seldom that British Honduras features in the headlines and leading articles of the world press, but universal interest in the Colony was aroused when the dispute between H. M. Government and the Government of Guatemala over the so-called Belize Question flared up to a crisis early in 1948.

On February 22nd Sir Gerald Hawkesworth, K.C.M.G., M.C., then Governor of British Honduras, received news of the threatening attitude adopted by certain elements in Guatemala against British Honduras. Preparations to defend Belize (the capital) and the Airport by the British Honduras Volunteer Guard and the Police Force were immediately made, and on February 28th H.M.S. Sheffield, flagship of Admiral Sir William Tennant, Commander-in-Chief America and West Indies Station, arrived off Belize. H.M.S. Devonshire, carrying troops of the second Gloucestershire Regiment, followed on the 1st March, and adequate provision for the defence of British Honduras against any armed aggression was completed. (The detachment of regular troops remained throughout the year). These measures were taken solely for the defence of the freedom and rights of the people of British Honduras, who repeatedly and unmistakably declared their determination to remain under the British flag. The Government of Guatemala, however, closed the frontier between the two countries, and made unwarranted allegations that these precautions were aggressive in character.

Throughout this period the people of British Honduras remained calm and undaunted, and numerous Resolutions of Loyalty, of which the following is a typical example, were addressed to the Governor:—

“BE IT RESOLVED that we, the people of British Honduras, in public meeting assembled, recall at this hour that memorable day one hundred and fifty years ago when our forefathers, the Baymen, with the red blood coursing their veins, resolved to defy and did defy and defeat, the men of Spain and made secure to themselves and to their descendants for all time their proud and sacred British heritage.

The same red blood still courses through our veins. Today this same spirit animates our breasts. We are filled with the same resolution with the aid of the Mother Country, to defend to the death, our rights and liberties and to maintain within the British Empire the place of this our blessed country from the Rio Hondo to the Sarstoon.

We desire particularly, on this occasion to express our appreciation of the manner in which the Home Government sent the naval forces to protect our lives and property in consequence of threat of invasion.

We reaffirm our pledge of unswerving loyalty to His Majesty the King and pray God that he may long reign over us.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted through the proper channel to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies to be placed at the foot of the Throne."

It was thus that the citizens of British Honduras asserted their loyalty, and their determination to resist, by force if necessary, any foreign aggression. In the event, no attack was launched upon the Colony, and the position in the dispute itself remained unaltered throughout the year. His Majesty's Government repeatedly offered to submit the matter to arbitration by the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the obligations accepted by Great Britain under the Charter of the United Nations; but this offer has never been accepted by Guatemala. The only other event of major interest in connection with the dispute occurred in November when two ships of the Home Fleet (H.M.S. Sirius and H.M.S. Aisne) paid a routine visit to Belize as part of the programme of the Fleet's visit to the West Indies and Caribbean Colonies. This "violation of Guatemalan waters" evoked strong protest from the Government of the Republic, and the Guatemalan Foreign Minister went so far as to allege that the ships had brought armed reinforcements to the Colony. His Majesty's Government immediately denied this false allegation, for not a single man was left in British Honduras by the two vessels.

The frontier remained closed on the Guatemalan side for the remainder of the year.

Legislative Council elections were held during the first part of the year, and the first meeting of the newly elected Council took place on the 29th June. In October the posts of Colonial Secretary and Financial Secretary were separated, and the latter was appointed the third *ex-officio* member of the Legislative Council. Most important of the Ordinances enacted during the year were a Co-operative Societies Ordinance, to provide for the formation, and to regulate the operation of, Co-operative Societies; a Fisheries Ordinance, to consolidate and regulate the law relating to fisheries, and to give power to impose an export duty on fish; a Land Acquisition (Amendment) Ordinance, to extend the provision of the Land Acquisition Ordinance so as to enable approved "promoters" to acquire land compulsorily; and a Marketing Board Ordinance, to provide for the establishment of a Marketing Board.

The event of greatest constitutional importance in 1948 was the appointment, on the 31st January, of a Commission of Inquiry with the following terms of reference:—

FIRST: on the following proposals relating to the political constitution of the Colony, referred to in the summary of discussions held in London in July and August, 1947, between the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a deputation of the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council—



1. That the existing property and income qualifications for registration as a voter (contained in section 6 of Ordinance No. 14 of 1935) be abolished and universal adult suffrage without a literacy test be substituted therefor.

2. That the President of the Legislative Council be someone appointed by the Governor from outside the Council.

3. That there be some increase, up to less than twelve, in the number of the Elected Members of the Legislative Council.

4. That there should be retained in the Legislative Council some Nominated Members for the representation of special interests until such time as the whole population is in a position to take part in elections to the Legislative Council.

5. That Elected Members of the Legislative Council be in a clear majority over Official and Nominated Members combined.

6. That the life of the Legislative Council be increased from three years to five.

7. That the provision requiring a voter to exercise as many votes as there are vacancies to be filled (in Regulation 40 (1) of the Regulations in the Schedule to Ordinance No. 14 of 1935) be repealed.

8. That the Executive Council be reconstituted with a view to establishing a system of administration which would afford Elected Members of the Legislative Council the opportunity of participating in the work of Government.

SECONDLY: on the desirability of—

1. Reconstituting all District Town Boards so that the majority of members shall be elected.

2. Changing the existing manner of election to a District Town Board.

3. Each District Town Board electing its own Chairman.

4. Establishing, in villages with a population exceeding two hundred and fifty, Boards or Councils to whom would be given administrative and financial responsibility.

The Commission sat, in public and in private, on various occasions throughout the year, and visited some of the Districts. It had not submitted a report by the end of the year.

The Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council selected as the Colony's delegates to The Standing Closer Association Committee one member of Council—the Honourable Mr. W. H. Courtenay, member for the Western Division—and one other—Mr. F. R. Dragten, O.B.E., K.C., J.P. These delegates attended the meeting of the Committee held in Barbados in November.

Several important development schemes received approval during the year. These included:—

(a) The construction and staffing of a Technical Training School in Belize .. .. .	£ 44,500
(b) The construction of Ten Rural Dispensaries ..	25,000
(c) The Forest Regeneration Plan .. .. .	50,000
(d) The Purchase of Baking Pot Estate .. .. .	2,500

(destined to become a Central Farm and Agricultural Department Headquarters)	£
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(e) Feeder Roads .. .. .	100,000
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The two major road construction schemes—the Belize-Cayo Road and the Hector Creek Road—made good progress and are expected to be completed in 1949. A sum of £5,000 was approved under the central allocation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund for forestry research projects.

But the most important event of the year in the sphere of development was the publication in September of the Report of the British Guiana and British Honduras Settlement Commission. In so far as British Honduras is concerned, the Commission recommended a programme extending over 10 years at a cost of between £7 million—£10 million. Specific commercial projects included the expansion of the sugar and citrus industries, the establishment of banana and cocoa plantations and a dairying industry. Capital expenditure on roads, port facilities and hotel accommodation, and expenditure on experimental projects, surveys, and an expansion of social services, were also recommended. The report has been under careful consideration both in the Colonial Office and in the Colony; and certain discussions had taken place with the Colonial Development Corporation by the end of the year.

The 150th Anniversary of the Battle of St. George's Caye (in which the last attempt by the Spaniards to oust the British settlers from the settlement of Belize was decisively defeated) was observed with great enthusiasm throughout the Colony in a week of patriotic meetings and celebrations culminating on September 10th. A special issue of postage stamps marked the occasion, although these had not unfortunately been received in time for release until early in 1949.

Improved scales of salary were introduced throughout the Civil Service during the year, following the visit and report of Mr. T. F. Sandford, C.M.G., Salaries Commissioner. The new rates were introduced with retrospective effect to the 1st January, 1946. This retrospective payment imposed a heavy strain on the Colony's finances, but a special grant of \$100,750 was received from H.M. Government in this connection. The financial year opened (January 1st) with a surplus of \$280,425 and closed (December 31st) with a surplus of \$95,000. The Fiscal Revision Committee, which had reported in 1947 and early in 1948, was convened again towards the end of the year to re-examine possibilities of increasing revenue.

Sir Gerald Hawkesworth was obliged to tender his resignation as Governor of British Honduras on health grounds, and left the Colony at the end of July. His departure was regretted by all sections of the population. His successor, Mr. R. H. Garvey, C.M.G., M.B.E., Administrator of St. Vincent, Windward Islands, took up his appointment shortly after the end of the year.

A long and distinguished career in the service of the Colony came to an end when Mr. A. N. Wolffsohn, C.M.G., O.B.E., Colonial Secretary, went on leave pending retirement in mid-June.

# PART II

## Chapter I: Population

At a Census taken in April, 1946, the population of the Colony was 59,149, and at the end of 1947 it was estimated to be 61,503, comprising 29,835 males and 31,668 females. Intermixing is such that racial classification of the population is difficult and unreliable, but it may be said that the Northern and Western Districts are inhabited principally by the descendants of Spanish and Maya Indian peoples. In the Capital, the 'Creoles' (descendants of the early settlers) are in the majority though there are a large number of people of Latin extraction from the neighbouring republics, and of Syrians and Chinese. There is a limited number of Europeans and United States nationals. There is in the Southern Districts of Stann Creek and Toledo, a predominance of Caribs but Maya Indians have some large settlements in the extreme South.

The population was distributed in the Districts of the Colony as follows:

<i>District</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Area in Square Miles</i>	<i>Persons per Square Mile</i>
Belize .. ..	28,591	1,623	17.62
Northern .. ..	13,206	2,180	6.06
Stann Creek ..	6,765	840	8.05
Toledo .. ..	6,653	2,125	3.13
Cayo .. ..	7,933	1,830	4.32
<hr/>			
The Colony ..	63,148	8,598	7.34

The population of the leading towns at the 1946 Census was as follows:

	<i>Persons</i>
Belize .. ..	21,886
Corozal .. ..	2,190
Orange Walk ..	1,395
Cayo .. ..	1,548
Benque Viejo ..	1,264
Stann Creek ..	3,414
Punta Gorda ..	1,375.

A review of the 1931 and 1946 census figures shows increases in the population of all the Districts except the Northern, which declined 3.81 per cent., although the preponderance of births over deaths from year to year during the intervening period would have led one to expect an increase. This position rather supports the general view of a trend to concentration in Belize due to the exodus, from the agriculturally important Northern District, of small-planters, who, it is common belief, have forsaken the land in search of more lucrative occupations. The slightest margin of increase is to be observed in the Toledo District (2.42 per cent.), which is no doubt due partly to abnormal death rates throughout the years 1931 to 1946, (which reached the alarming figure of 53.6 in 1945), and partly to migration from the District of its residents in search of employment.

Births per thousand of the population dropped from 40.2 in 1947 to 39.57. Deaths per thousand were recorded at 13.63 as against 17.5 in 1947. The infantile mortality rate is highest in the Toledo District with its large Maya population, which recorded rates of over 27 per cent. in 1944 and 1945, but declined to just under 19 in 1946 and further to 16.5 in 1947. The rate is now recorded at 15.68. The lowest rate recorded is that of Belize—8.27. The rates in the other Districts are as follows: Northern 12.13; Stann Creek 10.87; Cayo 10.27 and for the Colony 10.56.

## Chapter II: Occupations, Wages, Labour Organization

### PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS

In British Honduras the employment available in the forest industries, the mainstay of the Colony's economy, is largely seasonal, timber extraction operations being principally confined to the first six months of the year when the dry weather permits logging over primitive roads, while chicle bleeding is carried out in the wet months, July to February, as rains induce a good flow of gum from the trees.

A statement of the particulars of the employment in the principal occupations on the 31st December, 1948, follows:

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<b>PRIMARY PRODUCTION</b>				
<i>Mahogany</i> Labourers	355	\$20.00 to \$23.00 per month plus rations at \$2.50 per week	50	Employment usually seasonal from October to June.
Tractor and Truck Drivers	42	\$60.00 to \$75.00 per month and rations at \$3.50 per week		
Other Workers	88	\$30.00 a month and rations at \$3.50 per week		
	485			
<i>Pine and other secondary woods</i> Labourers working in the forests at felling, etc.	185	\$1.40 a day		
Tractor and Truck Drivers	53	\$50.00 to \$65.00 a month	50	
Other Workers	25	\$1.50 per day		

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<i>Chicle</i> Bleeders, Muleteers and others	1,890	25¢ a lb. for Crown Gum 35¢ a lb. for Superior Gum	50	
	1,890			
<i>Agriculture</i> Cane Fields	195	\$1.00 a day	48	
	195			
<b>SECONDARY PRODUCTION</b>				
Sawmills				
Supervisors and clerical workers	81	\$2.75 to \$5.00 a day		
Machinery attendants and operators	126	\$2.00 to \$3.00 a day	56	
Labourers handling lumber	435	\$1.30 and \$1.50 a day		
	642			
<i>Factories and other Industrial Establishments</i>				
Aerated Water				
Males	32	\$2.50 to \$12.00 per week	45	
Females	31	do.		
Cigarettes Males	19	\$3.00 to \$14.00 per week	45	
Females	20	\$4.00 to \$12.00 per week		
Canning grape-fruit juice Males				
Females	126	\$1.20 to \$3.00 per day	48	
Ice Males	6	\$1.00 to \$1.50 a day	48	
Soap Males	12	\$9.00 to \$20.00 per week	45	
Females	1	\$8.00 per week		
Sugar Males	46	\$1.50 to \$2.75 a day	54	

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
Bakeries	45	\$3.00 to \$18.00 per week	50	
Blacksmith and repair machine shops	45	\$8.00 to \$25.00 per week	48	
Cabinet Shops	45	\$2.25 to \$3.00 per day	48	
Printing Establishments	40	\$3.00 to \$15.00 per week	48	
Shoe repairing & manufacturing shops	85	\$6.00 to \$24.00 per week	48	
Tailoring Establishments	46	\$2.50 to \$9.00 per week	48	
Tinsmith shops	5			
	604			
<i>Boat Building &amp; Repairing</i>	75	15¢ to 47¢ per hour	48	
<i>Public Works Dept.</i>				
Road Labourers	382	\$1.58 to \$1.82 a day		
Lorry Drivers	54	\$2.32 to \$2.64 a day		
Carpenters and Painters	48	\$2.00 to \$3.68 a day	48	
Other Tradesmen	116	\$2.64 to \$4.32 a day		
	600			
<b>SERVICES</b>				
<i>Transport of goods by sea</i>				
(i) Handling general cargo	90	30¢ per hour and free food		Intermittent employment averaging 6 days a month
(ii) Stevedore handling logs for export	60	50¢ to 75¢ per hour		
(iii) Dock Labourers	75	29¢ per hour		
	225			

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<i>Forest Department</i>				
Labourers Males	137	\$1.00 to \$1.68 a day	48	
Females	9	Average earnings \$1.00 a day		
	146			
<i>Health Department</i>				
Labourers	62	\$1.45 to \$1.66 a day		
Cartmen	16	\$1.51 to \$1.92 a day	44	
Vehicle Drivers	2	\$2.19 to \$2.50 a day		
	80			
<i>Belize City Council</i>				
Labourers	16	\$1.74 to \$2.16 a day		
Other Workers	9	\$1.60 to \$2.75 a day	48	
	25			

\*Males unless otherwise stated.

### Cost of Living

From a survey held by the Labour Department in 1942 embracing 100 working class families in Belize it was found that the average amounts paid out weekly under the main groups of household expenditure were as follows:

Food .. .. .	\$7.00
Clothing .. .. .	1.37
Rent .. .. .	1.20
Fuel, Light and Washing ..	0.98
Other Items .. .. .	2.30
	<u>\$12.95</u>

Price levels at the time of the survey were 34.7 above pre-war conditions and as the index figure had risen to 211 by the end of 1948 the cost of maintaining unchanged the 1942 standards of living would then have been approximately \$27.32.

The trend of the cost of living in 1948 is shown by the index figures hereunder:

1st January .. ..	206
1st April .. ..	211
1st July .. ..	210
1st October .. ..	209

No accurate records are available as to the cost of living for Europeans but the rates for hotels and boarding houses vary from \$3.00 to \$4.00 a day, and from \$80.00 to \$100.00 a month.

## LABOUR ORGANIZATION

### *Size and Work of the Labour Department*

The Labour Department was established in 1939 with duties following closely those of other colonies. The staff during 1948 consisted of the Labour Officer, a Labour Inspector, one Second Class Clerk and an office messenger.

### *Trade Unions*

Two new trade unions came into existence during 1948 and these brought the total number of registered trade unions to five. Particulars of these organizations and their reported memberships on the 31st December, 1948, are as follows:—

(a) The British Honduras General Workers Union (formed in 1939), a general union of all classes of workers, including domestic servants. Its headquarters are in Belize, and with its six branches in the District areas the number of financial members was reported as 1,818, of whom 125 were females.

(b) The Carpenters, Cabinet Makers and Painters Union, established in 1944, whose membership is restricted to the classes of workers named. The number of financial members was stated to be 61.

(c) The National Labour Union, which was registered during 1947, with 227 financial members. This Union is confined to labourers only, but its Rules provide for the admission of other classes of workers if it can be proven that they cannot obtain membership with any other trade union.

(d) The British Honduras Civil Service Association which was originally formed in 1922, and became a registered trade union on the 26th January, 1948. There were 386 names on the roll of members.

(e) The British Honduras Mercantile Clerks Union of shop assistants, and clerical workers, which was registered on the 14th July, 1948. The paid-up membership was stated to be 142, inclusive of 69 females.

No associations of employers have yet been formed.

### *Labour Disputes*

There were no collective disputes. 195 individual complaints were lodged at and dealt with by the Labour Department: these involved dismissals without notice, failure to pay wages due, illegal deductions from wages, overcharges for goods at camp commissariats, compensation for accidents received in the course of work, and other matters.

### *Labour Legislation*

The relations between master and servant are controlled by the Employers and Workers Ordinance, No. 6 of 1943, which repealed and replaced previous legislation dating as far back as 1883.



A system of workmen's compensation for accidents sustained during the course of their employment was established in 1943. It follows closely the system in other West Indian colonies. Agricultural workers are included in its scope and insurance is available from various firms operating in the Colony.

The Factories Ordinance, No. 9 of 1942, provides for the maintenance of machinery safeguards and for the regulation of the conditions of employment in factories.

The establishment and registration of Trade Unions is governed by the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, whilst the settlement of trade disputes may be effected by arbitration under the Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance, 1939, when voluntary means fail.

Other ordinances in force govern the practices of recruiting, provide for the fixing of minimum wages, and regulate the employment of women, young persons and children.

There is no legislation to provide for old age pensions, or for relief in cases of sickness. The indigent receive outdoor relief from a charity vote which is administered by the Outdoor Relief Committee and the sick are given free treatment at Government hospitals if they are found to be destitute.

The only important variation in the legislation relating to conditions of employment was the extension, by Statutory Rules and Orders No. 21 of 1948, of the provisions of the Shops (Regulation) Ordinance, 1943, (which formerly applied to the capital city of Belize only) to all the principal towns in the Districts, and shop assistants in these smaller towns now enjoy the same benefits of reduced hours of work and the privilege of an annual holiday with pay provided in the Ordinance.

## **Chapter III: Public Finance and Taxation**

### **REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE**

Throughout the war years, it was not found possible to meet Government Expenditure, which increased steadily, year by year, entirely from Revenue raised within the Colony, notwithstanding the considerable expansion which took place in Customs Duties and Income Tax. The resultant annual deficit was met by a grant-in-aid from His Majesty's Treasury, except in 1947 when it was not required.

#### **1. Accounts for the Calendar Year 1948.**

The surplus brought forward from 1947 amounted to 253,263, which did not include \$27,162 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. True revenue for 1948 is shown at \$2,554,151, while true expenditure is given as \$2,813,529. The surplus at the end of December 1948 was \$76,063 which did not include \$26,671 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. The sum of £25,000 was drawn from His Majesty's Exchequer during the year 1948 as a contribution towards the retrospective payment of increases in salaries from 1st January 1946 on the revised scales.

*Revenue*

The total true revenue of the Colony rose from \$2,206,218 in 1946 to \$2,554,151 in 1948, the figure for 1947 being \$2,505,798. Comparative figures for three years are shown below under the principal heads.

	1946 \$	1947 \$	*1948 \$
Customs, including Surtaxes ..	932,485	1,227,026	1,061,045
Internal Taxation .. ..	567,095	639,150	752,713
Revenue of Government Property	106,509	190,670	147,114
Fees of Court or Office, etc. . .	232,532	134,036	179,329
Self-balancing Revenue (Posts & Telegraphs, Telephones, Electric Power) .. ..	251,604	225,995	330,536
Interest and Sinking Fund of repayments .. ..	74,660	61,086	55,739
Miscellaneous .. ..	40,333	27,835	27,675
True Revenue ..	2,206,218	2,505,798	2,554,151

*Receipts from Imperial Funds*

Colonial Development & Welfare	350,683	435,360	510,128
Grant-in-aid .. ..	80,600	—	100,750
Total Revenue ..	2,637,501	2,941,158	3,165,029

The Internal Taxation increases were largely due to the growing yield from income tax, which in 1946 was \$260,413, in 1947 \$346,818 and in 1948 \$414,127.

*Expenditure*

The comparative figures shown below have been classified under main heads.

	1946 \$	1947 \$	*1948 \$
Administration .. ..	985,555	1,281,360	1,428,915
Social Services (Education, Health, Prisons,) .. ..	401,118	476,028	568,248
Subventions (including price stabilization) .. ..	194,501	35,322	36,941
Public Debt .. ..	164,558	163,579	157,911
Public Works Improvements ..	168,199	153,765	219,305
Self-balancing Expenditure (Posts, Telegraphs, Telephones and Electric Power) .. ..	168,482	244,206	253,008

\*Provisional figures.

<b>Expenditure on Colonial Development &amp; Welfare Schemes</b>	356,845	433,401	528,699
<b>Production (Agriculture &amp; Forestry) .. .. .</b>	110,350	122,324	149,201
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,549,608	2,909,985	3,342,228

Administration includes expenditure on Justice, Police, Pensions, Defence, Public Works and some minor branches of Government work. The large increase in the expenditure on this head in 1948 is due to the increase in salary scales with retrospective effect from 1st January, 1948.

## 2. Public Debt

The outstanding debt of the Colony at the 31st December, 1948, amounted to \$1,581,281, of which sum \$94,150 was in respect of borrowings made locally. Sinking funds in hand amounted to \$336,054, thus giving a figure of \$1,245,227 as the net outstanding debt. The total interest being paid on the loans outstanding represents a rate of 4.3 per centum per annum. Of the total amount owing, the sum of \$404,685 is outstanding to the Imperial Treasury, being the balance of loans made in 1932 for reconstruction and development work following the hurricane in 1931.\* Loan charges, which in 1948 amounted to \$157,911, representing 4.7 per cent of the total expenditure, constitute a not inconsiderable burden on the revenues of the Colony.

\*This amount, however is being remitted by the Imperial Treasury.

## 3. Assets and Liabilities

A provisional statement of the Assets and Liabilities of the Colony as at 31st December, 1948, shows Assets divisible as follows:

	* \$
Cash .. .. .	262,877
Investments of Various Funds .. ..	1,784,267
Advances to official and public organizations	179,822
	<hr/>
	\$2,226,966

Liabilities may be classified briefly as shown below:

	* \$
Unexpended balances of loans .. ..	3,342
Deposits—Fund balances, etc. .. ..	2,142,960
Drafts .. .. .	4,601
Surplus .. .. .	76,063
	<hr/>
	\$2,226,966

In addition, the following information must be given to present a true account.

\*Provisional figures.

		\$
Public Debt of the Colony .. .. .	1,581,281	
Less accumulated Sinking Fund in hand ..	336,054	
	<hr/>	
	1,245,227	
Loan Investments .. .. .	606,794	
	<hr/>	

The sum of \$26,671 was also due to the Colony on account of expenditure on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes.

#### 4. Description of the Main Heads of Taxation

The main heads and their yield in revenue are set out below:

	1946	1947	*1948
	\$	\$	\$
<i>Customs</i>			
Import Duties .. .. .	766,845	1,042,246	890,328
Export Duties .. .. .	90,670	117,195	109,318
Package Tax .. .. .	50,936	53,435	25,366
Harbour Dues, etc. .. ..	11,995	14,150	15,441
Entry Tax .. .. .			20,593
<i>Internal Taxation, etc.</i>			
Excise Duties .. .. .	220,031	186,862	203,902
Income Tax .. .. .	260,413	346,818	414,127
Land Tax .. .. .	40,242	39,653	39,429
Estate Duty .. .. .	5,729	3,311	35,161
Licences, Banks & Fire Insurance Companies .. ..	1,376	1,443	1,523
Other Licences:			
Motor Vehicles, etc. .. ..	18,672	19,933	25,167
Fines of Court .. .. .	11,763	17,385	13,401
Fees of Court and Stamp Duties	19,020	14,750	12,620
Warehouse Rents .. .. .	32,549	37,886	32,579

*Import Duties.* The tariff of import duties is largely *ad valorem* with a general duty of 25 per centum and a preferential rate of 12½ per centum. Specific duties are levied on wines, certain defined spirits and tobacco and cigarettes. Equipment for agricultural and forestry operations is admitted free of duty.

*Export Duties* are levied upon chicle, coconuts, mahogany, cedar, pine and fish.

*Package Tax.* This is a tax of 15 cents on every package passing through the Customs Department.

*Entry Tax.* This Tax came into effect on 21.7.48 imposing a 1 % Tax on the C. I. F. values on all goods imported into the Colony for home consumption. This repealed the Package Tax Ordinance.

\*Provisional figures for 1948.

*Excise Duty* is imposed on locally produced rum at the rate of \$4.50 per proof gallon if intended for consumption within the Colony. There is also a small duty on tobacco, cigars and cigarettes.

*Land Tax.* A tax is levied on all lands at the rate of 1½ cents an acre.

*Income Tax.* Increased rates of tax were imposed during 1948 providing for a levy on the chargeable income of any person at the rate of 5 per centum of the first \$500 increasing by a sliding scale up to 35 per centum on that part of incomes in excess of \$19,000. A surtax on a sliding scale is also levied on chargeable income in excess of \$10,000 being 10 per centum on the first \$5,000, 15 per centum on the next \$5,000 and 20 per centum on the remainder. Company Tax is at the rate of 35 cents on every dollar of chargeable income of a Company.

*Licences, Banks and Fire Insurance Companies.* Any establishment carrying on the business of banking pays an annual licence fee of \$500, and Fire Insurance Companies pay a licence fee at the rate of 2½ per centum on gross premiums with a minimum fee of 25 dollars.

*Estate Duty.* Duty is chargeable on estates over \$100 based on a scale which is \$1.00 per centum on estates up to \$500 increasing to \$15.00 per centum on estates over \$50,000.

*Licences—Motor Vehicles.* An annual duty is payable on all motor vehicles varying according to the weight of the vehicle, its classification, and the purpose it serves.

*Stamp Duties.* The chief features are impositions of 3 cents on cheques, receipts and bills of exchange with 10 cents for every \$100 on promissory notes. On transfers of property and mortgages the rates are 25 and 10 cents respectively for every \$50.00 or part thereof.

*Warehouse Rents.* A charge is made on merchandise which is deposited in bond, usually for re-export.

## 5. Customs Tariff

Broadly, the Customs Schedule of Duties may be described as a two-part *ad valorem* tariff on C.I.F. prices with specific duties on a few selected articles. Under the general tariff, the majority of the small and general importations subject to *ad valorem* duties bear a 25 per cent imposition; under the preferential tariff the duty is one of 12½ per cent.

As a consequence of an Ordinance passed in 1939 to impose as a wartime measure a surtax on certain Customs duties, the duty on a number of articles, the chief of which were bicycles, clocks, watches, hosiery, wines and spirits, cigarettes and sugar, was increased by 25 per centum; the duty on a few other articles was increased on a specific basis.

Equipment, such as trucks, tractors, carts, wagons and agricultural implements, imported to aid in agriculture or in forestry operations, is admitted

free. Machinery for agricultural purposes, sugar manufacturing, marine purposes, and printing, together with sewing machines, are free under the Preferential Tariff and bear only a five per cent impost under the General Tariff.

Specific duties, with some qualifications, are levied on importations of cattle, on certain manufactured articles such as bicycles, boots and shoes, fuel oils and petroleum, on the chief items of food and on wines, spirits and tobacco.

Some imports, the principal of which are clocks, jewellery, cutlery, plated goods and jams, etc., bear a thirty per cent levy on the General Tariff and fifteen per cent on the Preferential.

## 6. Excise

Excise Duties are confined to rum and tobacco, the rate on the former being \$4.50 per gallon if not exceeding the strength of proof and \$4.50 per proof gallon. The rates on tobacco, as increased by a war surtax, are now:

- (a) cigars, weighing not more than 5 lb. per 1,000 20 cents per 100  
weighing over 5 lb. per 1,000 .. .. . 50 cents per 100
- (b) cigarettes weighing not more than 3 lb. per  
1,000 .. .. . 15 cents per 100  
weighing over 3 lb. per 1,000 .. .. . 30 cents per 100
- (c) manufactured .. .. . 60 cents per lb.

*Stamp Duties.* The main features have been described elsewhere in this chapter. Some specific rates are given below:

	\$
Affidavits and Declarations .. .. .	.50
Agreements: if not under seal .. .. .	.10
if under seal .. .. .	2.50
Bills of Exchange payable on demand or at sight or on presentation or within three days after date or sight .. .. .	.03
Bill of Lading for export of goods .. .. .	.10
Bonds: For every \$50 or part of \$50 of the amount of the penalty .. .. .	.10
To a maximum .. .. .	2.50
Deeds not charged with <i>ad valorem</i> duty .. .. .	2.50
Leases, Tenancy Agreements for definite terms not exceeding a year:	
For a dwelling house rent less than \$96 p.a. .. .. .	.02
In other cases: if not under seal .. .. .	.10
if under seal .. .. .	2.50
Passports .. .. .	2.50
Renewal fee for each year .. .. .	.25
Share Warrants to bearer by a Company Registered in the Colony \$50 or part of \$50 of nominal value .. .. .	.75

## 7. Income Tax

Income Tax on individuals was payable at the following rates:

	\$		
On the first	500	of Chargeable Income	5%
„ next	500	„	6%
„ „	500	„	8%
„ „	500	„	10%
„ „	500	„	12½%
„ „	500	„	15%
„ „	500	„	17½%
„ „	1,000	„	20%
„ „	4,500	„	25%
„ „	10,000	„	30%
On all amounts above \$19,000		„	35%

The rates of Surtax on Individuals were:

On the first \$5,000 in excess of \$10,000 of Chargeable Income	10%
On the next \$5,000 .. .. .	15%
On the remainder .. .. .	20%

The tax on Companies was 35%.

*Incidence of Income Tax*

## Tax Payable

Gross Income	Single Person	Married Man	Married man with one child	Married Man with two children
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1,000	20.00	5.00	—	—
1,500	46.00	28.00	17.50	7.50
2,000	79.00	55.00	43.00	31.00
3,000	170.00	135.00	115.00	95.00
4,000	300.00	252.50	222.50	195.00
5,000	470.00	410.00	370.00	335.00
6,000	695.00	620.00	570.00	530.00
7,000	945.00	870.00	820.00	770.00
8,000	1,195.00	1,120.00	1,070.00	1,020.00
9,000	1,445.00	1,370.00	1,320.00	1,270.00
10,000	1,695.00	1,620.00	1,570.50	1,520.00
15,000	3,595.00	3,475.00	3,395.00	3,315.00
20,000	5,795.00	5,660.00	5,570.00	5,480.00
35,000	13,995.00	13,850.00	13,720.00	13,610.00

Deductions allowed against gross income were:

Personal allowance	.. .. .	\$500
Wife	.. .. .	\$300
Each child	.. .. .	\$200
Dependent relative		\$125
Earned Income 1/10 of gross income up to ..		\$500
Life Insurance Premiums up to a certain limit		
Gifts to charity.		

### 8. Estate Duty

Under the provisions of an Ordinance in 1927, Estate Duty is payable according to a general scale as follows:

Where the principal value of the estate

Exceeds	\$		\$		\$
	100 but does not exceed		500	Duty to be payable at	1.00%
"	500	"	2,000	"	1.50%
"	2,000	"	4,000	"	2.00%
"	4,000	"	6,000	"	3.00%
"	6,000	"	10,000	"	3.50%
"	10,000	"	15,000	"	4.50%
"	15,000	"	20,000	"	5.50%
"	20,000	"	25,000	"	6.50%
"	25,000	"	30,000	"	8.00%
"	30,000	"	50,000	"	10.00%
"	50,000	"	—	"	15.00%

## Chapter IV: Currency and Banking

### CURRENCY

#### *Standard and Legal Tender*

The standard of currency is the British Honduras dollar which is of the equivalent value of the dollar of the United States of America. Currency notes in denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, and \$10 issued by the Currency Commissioners are legal tender up to any amount. Subsidiary silver currency is legal tender in payment of any amount not exceeding ten dollars but coins of bronze nickel or mixed metal in five cent or one cent pieces are legal tender up to fifty cents only.

#### *Circulation*

The note circulation of the Colony, which stood at \$283,536 at the 31st December, 1939, expanded to \$832,331 at the end of 1948. The figures for each denomination were as follows:

	Number of Notes	Amount \$
\$1	92,867	92,867
\$2	49,652	99,304
\$5	87,224	436,120
\$10	20,404	204,040
		<hr/> \$832,331



This figure represented an increase of \$20,933 over the quantity in circulation a year before. The reserve of notes, at the commencement of the year was \$1,216,000. The issues during the year amounted to \$142,000 leaving a balance on hand at 31st December of \$1,074,000.

### *Subsidiary Currency*

The Coin issue of the Colonial Government at the 31st December was as follows:

<i>Silver</i>		\$
50 cent pieces.. ..	69,952	
25   "   " .. ..	49,389	
10   "   " .. ..	25,739	
5   "   " .. ..	5,546	
<i>Mixed metal (nickel, bronze, etc)</i>		
5 cent pieces.. ..	20,003	
1   "   " (bronze)	12,954	
		<hr/> \$183,583

### BANKING

There is only one banking establishment in the Colony, that of the Royal Bank of Canada in Belize which was established in 1912 when the Bank of British Honduras was purchased. The Bank provides all the usual banking services.

The Government Savings Bank, operating from the Treasury in Belize, with a branch in the administrative centre of each district, increased its deposits from \$410,632 at the 1st January, 1939, to \$1,808,903 at the end of 1948. The deposits during 1948, increased by \$69,191 as compared with the figures of the previous year. Account holders numbered 7,575 with an average holding of \$239.

## Chapter V: Commerce

### EXPORTS

The Colony's chief exports are mahogany and cedar logs, mahogany, cedar and pine lumber, bananas and citrus fruits and re-exports of manufactured articles.

The exports for the years 1947 and 1948 were as follows:—

	1947	1948
Domestic Exports .. ..	\$4,540,707	\$4,243,522
Re-Exports .. ..	1,611,303	1,899,079
Total Exports .. ..	<hr/> \$6,152,010	<hr/> \$6,142,601

Grapefruit Juice to the value of \$429,473 was exported during 1948 as compared with \$416,904 in 1947. The exports of Chicle Gums were \$1,444,

655 as against 1947 figures which were \$1,669,674. There has been a gradual annual increase of the exports of Pine and Mahogany lumber. The exports of Pine lumber amounted to \$418,553 as against \$156,911 in 1947. Mahogany lumber exported realized \$1,203,898 in 1948 and \$1,089,784 in 1947. The exports of Mahogany logs, which went principally to the United States of America, amounted to \$1,438,623 in 1948 as against \$1,522,009 in 1947. Coconuts exported in 1948 amounted to \$154,429 as against the exports in 1947 of \$155,438.

#### IMPORTS

Imports showed a decrease of \$207,376 compared with the previous year's figure of \$8,282,836, this is due principally to the restrictions on Imports. Mahogany logs imported into the Colony did not play a major part in the imports of 1948, the imports being in 1948 \$593,114, this however showed a slight increase over that of 1947, which was \$548,090. The imports of rice during the current year amounted to 24,467 cwt. at a value of \$250,467; 1947 imports were 22,293 cwt. costing \$217,505. 36,743 bags of flour (196 lb.) cost \$495,251 in 1948 while 36,868 cost \$510,051 in 1947. The imports of motor cars and trucks and jeeps were 86 units to the value of \$116,953, while

### COLONIAL ANNUAL REPORT : BRITISH HONDURAS 1948

#### E R R A T U M

##### *Page 20, Chapter V*

Exports for 1947 and 1948. The figures in the first column should be headed 1948 not 1947 and in the second 1947 not 1948.

porary Farm Demonstrators were employed under a Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme for increased food production.

##### *Crop Production.*

The dry season was of normal duration and generally favourable for the preparation of the farms for the planting and production of the principal food crops. The area cleared was considerably larger than in 1947. With the onset of the rains, particularly in the Northern District which is the principal maize growing area, severe flooding occurred. This prevented the planting of the total acreage intended for maize but added materially to the area under rice. The yield of most of the crops normally planted during the first half of the year, was affected by an exceptionally long and dry period during the second half of the year. Approximate estimates of acreages and yields for the principal crops were:—

Maize (Corn)	14,500 acres yielding 1,000 lb. per acre
Rice (Paddy)	3,260 acres yielding 1,200 lb. per acre

Beans (various)	900 acres yielding 250 lb. per acre
Root Crops (yams, cassava, tannia)	2,500 acres yielding 2,300 lb. per acre
Plantains & Bananas	3,800 acres
Coconuts	6,200 acres yielding 2,600 nuts per acre
Citrus	2,000 acres yielding 120 boxes of 90 lb. each
Sugar Cane	2,000 acres yielding 13 tons cane per acre.

#### LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION.

An appreciable improvement occurred in the general care and management of livestock, largely due to improved veterinary services, the regular supply and use of drugs and earlier notification of and attention to the commoner locally occurring complaints of livestock. Attention was also given to breeding by the wider appreciation and use of the stud bulls and boars maintained by the Department of Agriculture at various centres in the principal livestock areas.

Approximate figures for the various types of livestock were:—

Cattle (milk, beef and draught)	10,600
Pigs	10,000
Horses, mules and donkeys	3,000
Sheep and Goats	500
Poultry (Chickens, Turkeys, Ducks)	45,000

#### ORGANISATION AND DESTINATION OF PRODUCTION

*Grain Crops.* An appreciably larger quantity of maize was marketed. This was as a result of the increased acreage planted which encouraged the Mayan Indians to dispose of a larger proportion of this crop than is usual. With the exception of relatively small areas, ample stocks were kept for domestic consumption.

Exports of maize to Jamaica and the United Kingdom amounted to 360 tons. This was the first recorded export of any appreciable quantity of this crop.

There was a marked increase in the production of rice both in the Toledo and Northern Districts and growers sold larger quantities in addition to retaining increased amounts for consumption.

*Beans.* Production was almost entirely for local domestic consumption and smaller quantities than usual were marketed.

*Bananas.* In spite of the ravages of leaf spot disease the newly planted acreage continued to increase and exports from the Monkey River area, in particular, were larger than for several years past. Approximately 114,000 bunches valued at \$65,000 were exported.

*Coconuts.* A general decline in the productivity of the plantations in the Northern District reduced the marketable crop. Uncertainty as to prices also had an unsettling effect. Efforts were made to divert a much greater proportion of the crop than usual to oil manufacture for local consumption. Slightly under 3,000,000 nuts valued at \$154,420 were exported.

*Citrus.* Conditions were favourable and a record crop was reaped in the Stann Creek District. Extensive areas of land were cleared, nurseries prepared and planted by private interests and other steps taken to increase production as rapidly as possible. Towards the end of the year the export of grapefruit as whole fruit was resumed for the first time since the end of the war. Exports of fruit and juice in 1948 were to the United Kingdom only. Total exports during the year amounted to \$472,650 approximately.

*Sugar Cane.* Production of the crop in the field was in the hands of small growers. There was a considerable increase in the crop planted in 1948. Sales amounted to 10,500 tons of sugar cane. In addition to small quantities of a low grade brown sugar produced in the Toledo District principally, 1,126 tons of white sugar were produced in the Northern District. Production did not meet local requirements and importation from Jamaica was necessary.

### *Marketing.*

With the enactment of legislation to establish the Marketing Board, the Board of Agriculture ceased to exist. The guaranteed prices offered by the Board of Agriculture were paid to the growers throughout the year. These prices were sufficiently attractive to induce increased sales of the staple crops. The decline in the mahogany and chicle trades led to increased interest in corn and rice production for sale.

### FISHERIES

There is no Fisheries Department. Fishing in the Colony engages about 125 fishing dories and smacks of a length varying from fifteen to thirty-five feet and averaging from half a ton to ten tons each, with an aggregate of 150 tons.

During the year 1948 two motor vessels were engaged in the catching and purchasing of lobsters and other fishes for export to the United States of America. Both these vessels are equipped with deep-freeze refrigeration.

There was also one Catalina Flying Boat, which made regular trips, for a few months, from Florida to Belize for the purpose of buying lobsters to be taken to Florida. This aircraft took on each trip an average of about 4,000 pounds of live lobsters.

Legislation governing fishing generally in the waters of the Colony is still under consideration by Government. On the 24th September, 1948, an export duty on fish came into effect. The rates are as follows:—

- (a) Crawfish (commonly known as Crayfish,  
Rock Lobster and Shell Fish) 1½ cents a pound on gross  
tail weight.
- (b) Whole Crawfish ¼ cent a pound.
- (c) On other fish, whether fresh, salted or  
smoked .. .. . 1 cent a pound.

## FORESTRY

The principal forest products are:

- (a) Mahogany logs and lumber
- (b) Cedar logs and lumber
- (c) Pine lumber
- (d) Secondary hardwood logs and lumber
- (e) Rosewood sold by the ton
- (f) Chicle and Crown gum
- (g) Cohune kernels
- (h) Firewood and charcoal
- (i) Alligator skins

The total area of forest lands in the Colony is 8,337 square miles or 93.9 per cent of the total area. It consists of the following types:

I	Mangrove forests	.. .. .	approximately	2.8 %
II	Savannahs			
	(a) Brackish water	Wet Savannahs		2.7 %
	(b) Fresh water	)	„	
	(c) Inland	Pine forest		
III	Pine forest	Dry Savannahs	„	15.4 %
IV	High rain forest			
	1. Swamp forest	.. .. .	„	2.3 %
	2. Intermediate forest	.. .. .	„	17.9 %
	3. Mountain forest			
	4. Advanced forest	) Advanced forest	„	51.9 %
V	Secondary rain forest	)		
	(i) High forest	)		
	(ii) Existing and recently abandoned cultivation	.. .. .	„	7.0 %
Total land area of mainland				<u>100.0 %</u>

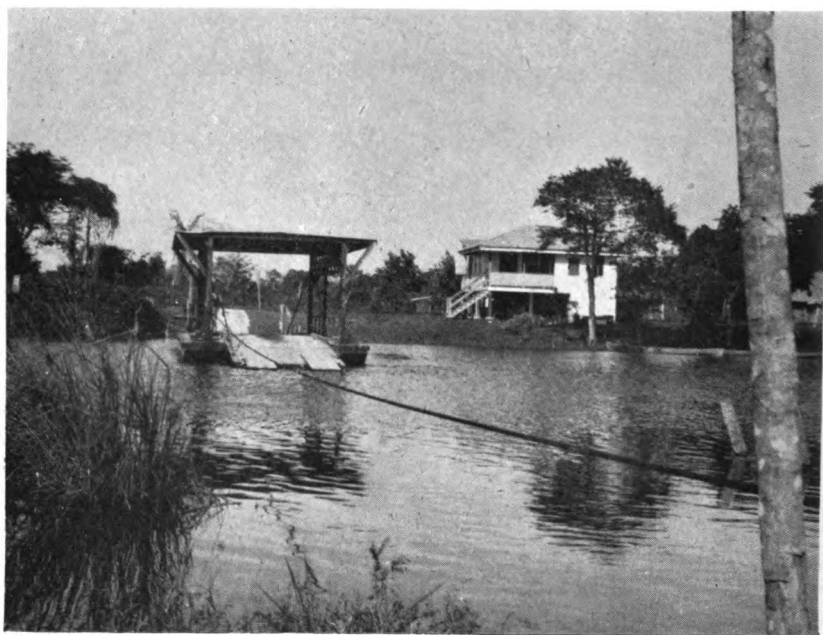
The change over from mahogany logging to pine sawmilling has made rapid progress during 1948. This has made it possible to introduce improvements in forest management by insisting on planned exploitation of all species, pine, mahogany and secondary hardwoods around each sawmill. Apart from one large concession among the hills all exports of logs from Crown lands and most of those from private lands had ceased by the end of the year. So prosperous was the pine lumber export market that the local requirements were not met.

The mahogany prices fell considerably towards the end of the year owing partly to large exports of logs and lumber from British West Africa and to an increase in the export of locally sawn mahogany.

The extensive cutting of pine lumber has necessitated increased fire protection measures to protect natural regeneration on the cut over sections.



A CHICLERO STRETCHING CHICLE AS IT BEGINS TO SET



THE NEW RIVER FERRY ON THE BELIZE-COROZAL ROAD NEAR THE MEXICAN BORDER



CROSSING THE RIVER AT EL CAYO IN A "DORIE"



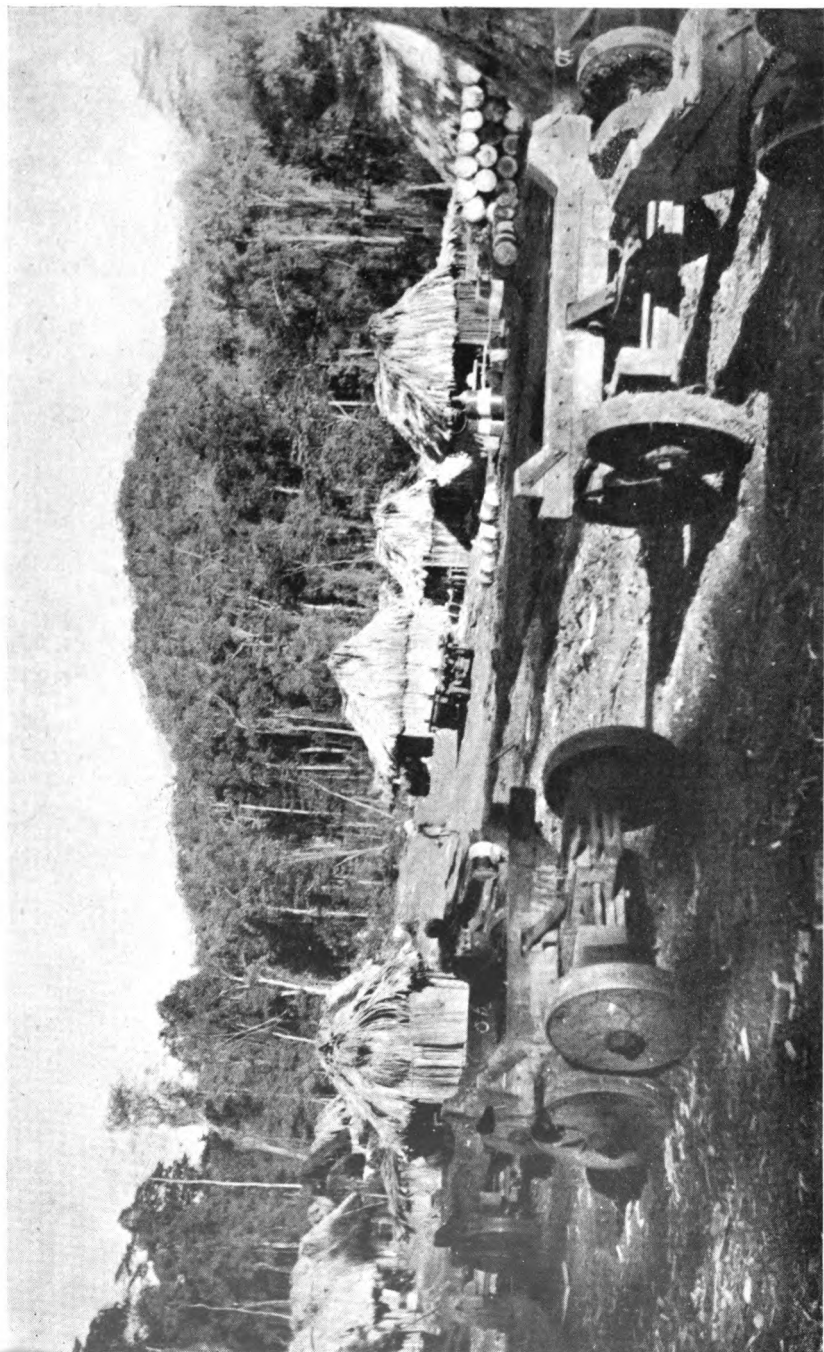


MAYA INDIAN CHILDREN DANCING THE ZAPATEADO ON THE  
FIESTA OF ST. JOSEPH



A TYPICAL MAYA INDIAN HOUSE IN BENQUE VIEJO, CAYO DISTRICT





A MAHOGANY CAMP, BRITISH HONDURAS

Jeep fire engines and ploughed firelines are being used to lessen the danger of fire and prevent its spread.

In spite of the competition from synthetic chicle, all chicleros available were employed in tapping this gum. The best chicle is required in all chewing gum and finds its largest market in the U.S.A. and Canada. However, owing to the currency restrictions increased amounts are now being exported to the United Kingdom. An inferior gum known as Crown Gum is extracted in the wetter forests of the South. In order to work this area, the royalty was removed for the 1948-49 season leaving an export duty of 4¢ per lb. as the sole charge on contractors. In 1948 466.3 tons of chicle and Crown Gum \$891,444 were exported.

The eight-year Forest Regeneration Plan incorporating a grant of \$200,000 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, was approved on 1st June, 1948, and immediately put into effect. It allows for the construction of 95 miles of dry season road to permit fire patrols to reach all pine forests and open up inaccessible blocks of hardwoods. Mahogany will be grown by natural regeneration in cut over forests and by planting in plantations with food crops. Pine being cut will be replaced by plantations formed where unproductive hardwood scrub now occupies the ground and by protecting natural regeneration from fire.

## Chapter VII: Social Services

### EDUCATION

The system of primary education is that of subsidized denominational schools and is controlled by a Board of Education appointed under the Education Ordinance, 1926 (No. 14 of 1926). The Governor is President of the Board, while the Director of Education acts as Secretary. A representative of the teachers is included among its members.

There are seventy-eight primary schools, three of which are managed by the Government. There are also some thirty-three unaided primary schools, both denominational and private. All primary schools are co-educational, with the exception of four in Belize. The ages of enrolment for the purposes of grants-in-aid are five to sixteen.

Secondary education is entirely in the hands of the denominations, but the Government assists by providing sixty-five scholarships for pupils from primary schools, each scholarship being tenable for four years though it may be extended for a fifth year with the approval of the Board of Education. There are five secondary schools, three of which are for boys. Three have preparatory departments. Teachers are largely recruited from abroad. The age-range of pupils receiving secondary education proper is eleven to eighteen. The schools are all situated in Belize.

There is no vocational school, but a scheme has been approved for establishing one in Belize; handicrafts are taught at two schools in Belize and one in Stann Creek, and instruction in domestic science is given to a limited num-

ber of girls from the higher standards at one centre in Belize. The teaching of agriculture is encouraged in rural schools by instruction grants to teachers, and by free grants of tools. The industrial school for male juvenile delinquents, which is conducted by the Salvation Army on behalf of the Government, and which was transferred from Stann Creek to a site near the Airfield, 8 miles from Belize in 1947, had to be dispersed in March 1948 to make room for the garrison which arrived then. Plans were well ahead at the end of 1948 for restarting in temporary quarters at Corozal, and for the building of a permanent home for them near Cayo.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen. That the enforcement of compulsion has been a success may be inferred from the fact that the percentage of the average attendance to the enrolment in the Colony is approximately eighty, the highest in the British Caribbean area. Education is not yet free, however, each primary school pupil being expected to pay a fee of 5 cents (3d.) weekly; few in fact do so.

An average of 221 certificated teachers and ninety-seven pupil teachers is employed in the primary schools. The majority of the teachers are untrained, but since 1941 selected teachers have been sent to training colleges in Jamaica, there being twelve such teachers training annually. Seventeen have thus far completed their training and have been posted to schools. Three supervisors, originally appointed as a Jeanes experiment by means of a Carnegie grant, are now permanent officers. They are rendering invaluable service in raising the standard of teaching in the schools.

The position of the teachers has been improved by the approval in 1946 of the granting of assistance towards housing. New and much improved salary scales are now paid, and the quantity and quality of recruits has improved considerably. The British Honduras Teachers' Federation, which was organized in 1939 with constituent associations in all the districts, holds an annual conference and makes recommendations to the Board of Education from time to time.

A study of the Indian villages and their schools was made during 1948 by the Department staff, with a view to drawing up a more appropriate curriculum. The Board of Education Rules had to be further revised, as a result of the introduction of the new salary scales and a reorganisation of the pupil teacher training system. New syllabuses for pupil teachers were drawn up by a committee on which the Teachers' Federation was represented.

The British Council supplies periodicals to certain schools, primary and secondary. It has also given books to the Jubilee Library, Belize, to form the nucleus of a Teachers' Reference Library.

Education has benefited from Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes under which grants have been approved for the free supply of text-books, stationery and equipment to schools, towards the rehabilitation of some twenty-eight school buildings damaged or destroyed by hurricane in 1942 and towards the holding of annual teachers' vacation courses during the past four years.

The Credit Union Movement continues to grow in strength.

The average enrolment of grant-aided primary schools was 10,441 in 1948 and the average attendance 8,431. The average enrolment in the secondary schools (excluding preparatory departments) was 568, and there was an estimated enrolment of 1,285 and average attendance of 927 in non-grant-aided primary schools and preparatory departments of the secondary schools.

For 1948 the total provision from the revenue of the Colony was \$229,111. The actual expenditure was \$221,410, which included \$28,977 paid in cost of living allowances.

#### HEALTH

The vital statistics for the year are as follows:—

Estimated population .. .. .	63,148
Number of births .. .. .	2,499
Birth Rate per 1,000 of population .. .. .	39.57
Number of deaths from all causes .. .. .	861
Death Rate per 1,000 of population .. .. .	13.63
Number of deaths in infants under 1 year of age ..	264
Infant Mortality Rate per 100 live births .. ..	100.56

#### *Malaria*

This disease still continues to hold first place in the causes of morbidity. 954 cases were treated in the various hospitals throughout the Colony, representing 16% of the total hospital admissions.

Anti-malarial work was continued in the Indian villages of San Pedro Columbia and San Antonio. The effect of anti-malarial measures is reflected in the births and deaths which are shown in the comparative table below:

	<i>San Antonio</i>			<i>San Pedro Columbia</i>		
	Births	Deaths	Balance	Births	Deaths	Balance
1945	38	66	28	12	30	18
1946	24	36	12	18	30	12
1947	71	39	42	19	20	1
1948	64	22	42	26	19	7

#### *Typhoid Fever*

Thirty-eight sporadic cases were reported as compared with sixty-one in 1947.

#### *Tuberculosis*

Fifty-six cases were reported as compared with seventy-four in the previous year.

#### *Venereal Diseases*

There were 6,081 attendances at the Venereal Diseases Clinic of the Belize Hospital. 3,150 bloods were examined by the Kahn reaction for syphilis; 748 or 23.7% were positive.

There has been a significant decline in the incidence of the late complications of gonorrhoea, which formerly contributed a large share to the surgical emergencies of the Hospital.

### *Medical Staff*

The establishment consists of a Senior Medical Officer, eight Medical Officers, a Matron, and a Nursing Sister. Other hospital staff consists of a Head Dispenser with two qualified assistants, and three apprentices, and two laboratory technicians. The nursing staff consists of thirteen staff nurses, and sixty-five nurses including nurses in training. The Health Staff includes eleven sanitary inspectors, an Inspector of Midwives, seven rural nurses and four District Nurses.

### *Hospitals*

There are six hospitals in the Colony, one for each district, with a total of 183 beds, twenty-two of which are in the maternity wards. The fees range from twenty-five cents a day for fourth-class patients to \$3.00 a day for the first-class, but no charge is made for the poor and indigent. Admissions to the Belize Hospital during 1948 numbered 3,640, and to District Hospitals 2,375. The Out-patients Department of Belize Hospital recorded 35,382 attendances including those who attended as ambulatory cases of illness, and also the various clinics including the Dental Clinic, casualty dressing and minor operations.

### *Sanitary Organization*

Sanitary Inspectors are in charge of the scavenging of the City; they are responsible for the inspection of all receptacles for the collection of water and for the rigid enforcement of the by-laws governing bakeries, restaurants, hotels and slaughter houses.

The sea and the canals which run through the town of Belize provide the only means for a majority of the householders to dispose of their night soil. Disagreeable and unsightly as it may seem, there can be little doubt that it is the best expedient which could be adopted. Methods of disposal of night soil in the country villages are faulty.

### HOUSING

In Belize, the population live in houses constructed of timber with galvanized iron roofs, standing usually on wooden piles about seven feet above the level of the ground, which is often swampy and flooded. The work of filling in plots with pipeshank from the sea bed is constantly being undertaken by private individuals and the City Council, while reclamation schemes have, from time to time, been undertaken by the Government. It is not usual to find any ground-floor rooms used for sleeping; their use is normally confined to storage, washing, or for kitchen purposes. Only a small number of the population live in houses which they own.

Housing conditions elsewhere in the Colony are poor. The principal building medium is locally grown pine with imported galvanized corrugated iron for roof covering. The Indians build of native round wood for framing with palmetto pole and mud walls with a thatched roof of local palm leaves.

In all towns and villages there is a definite shortage of housing accommodation, the shortage being most acute in the capital, Belize. There are at present in existence in Belize 7 Government owned houses which accommodate 7 families of the poorer type working class.

A housing scheme for Belize has been prepared consisting of thirty-three individual houses to be erected and twenty-two lots to be leased for building houses with the assistance of the Local Authority. Approval of this scheme is awaited.

#### SOCIAL WELFARE

During the year 1948, the revised scheme for the Social Welfare Department was approved. The staff of the Department now consists of the Co-operative and Social Welfare Officer, the Assistant Social Welfare Officer and the Handicraft Instructor.

(a) Village Councils continue to play their part in the rural areas. Although they have no official status, many communal amenities have been set up as a result of their efforts.

Women's Institutes have been formed at the villages of Rockstone Pond and Maskall on the Belize-Corozal Road. The Institute at Rockstone Pond is responsible for the running of a Soup Kitchen attached to their School. A young peoples group has also been formed at Maskall.

During the year five Credit Unions have been registered under the Credit Union Ordinance. The Credit Unions have kept away the loan sharks from many a door and serve as an easy means of providing credit for the poorer classes and the inculcation of the habit of thrift. Credit Unions are now well established in the urban areas and are now spreading to the rural areas.

Many Co-operative Groups have been organised mainly of the producer type. A Co-operative Ordinance is now on our statute book and the Co-operative rules are now awaiting passage through the Legislative Council. As soon as these rules are approved the Societies will be able to register.

Handicraft continues in the Government Institutions, at the Prison, Poor House and Asylum. A payment scheme has been introduced among the inmates of the Poor House, which apart from the financial value derived serves as a means of encouraging the inmates to feel that they are still part of society and has a contribution to make.

A Handicraft Centre has now been opened and classes of instruction have been given to students in the plaiting, weaving and spinning of coarse fibres and to boys in cabinet making. A Hobbies Club is also run in conjunction with the Handicraft Centre in the evening and is well attended.

(b) Public Assistance is administered through the Outdoor Relief Committee, of which the Social Welfare Officer is the Chairman. Recipients of

Outdoor Relief during the year numbered 891 persons and the expenditure for the period was \$30,271.26.

The Gann Rest House, a night shelter for homeless men operated by the Salvation Army, accommodated 8,634 men during the year; this shows a considerable increase as against 5,811 in 1947, the average being 719 as against 494 for the year 1947. The upkeep of this institution was met by a grant of \$720 from Government and \$231.47 from the Public Assistance Board and Lodgers fee of \$223.00. Sleeping accommodation is free, but a charge of two cents is made for tea in the morning.

During the year the Boys Training School the only institution for Juveniles in the Colony had to be closed at short notice. The return of the inmates to their homes caused an immediate increase in child delinquency. During the year some 195 cases were brought before the courts against juveniles. Wide use had to be made of the probation system as there was no institution to which to send them. Efforts are being made to re-open this institution in the very near future.

## Chapter VIII: Legislation

### *Antibiotics*

With a view to safeguarding the community against the evil effects resulting from the misuse of antibiotics, this Ordinance establishes a Committee charged with controlling the importation, storage, distribution, sale and use of antibiotics. The Committee is empowered to enter premises to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

### *Fisheries*

This Ordinance consolidates the law relating to fisheries and gives the Governor in Council power to impose an export duty on fish, such duty not to exceed five cents a pound. In the case of crawfish and lobsters the duty on whole weight is fixed at one-third of that on tail weight.

### *Co-operative Societies*

Ordinance No. 4 of 1948 makes provision, on the usual lines, for the formation of Co-operative Societies and for the regulation of their operations.

### *Entry Tax on Goods*

This Ordinance imposes a tax at the rate of one per centum of the value of goods imported into the Colony, with a maximum tax of ten cents. This enactment repeals the Package Tax Ordinance which imposed a tax of a specified amount on all packages irrespective of their sizes and of the values of their contents.

### *Banking and Insurance Companies Licence Duty*

This Ordinance requires payment of a licence duty by all insurance companies and not only, as hitherto, by companies carrying on fire insurance business.

### *Land Acquisition*

This is an amending Ordinance the object of which is to remove any doubt as to the power compulsorily to acquire land which is required by a corporation, company or person for a purpose which is likely to prove useful to the public or a substantial class or section thereof.

### *Marketing Board*

Ordinance No. 11 of 1948 establishes a Marketing Board of seven members with power to trade and deal in, *inter alia*, feeding stuffs for livestock, seeds, fertilisers and such commodities as will facilitate the operations of producers and help in processing and marketing products of the Colony. The funds of the Board consist of moneys accruing from its operations and moneys appropriated from public funds with the approval of the Legislative Council.

## **Chapter IX: Justice, Police and Prisons**

### **JUSTICE**

The English Common Law and all statutes of the Imperial Parliament 'in abrogation or derogation, or in any way declaratory of the Common Law' passed before 1899 extend to the Colony as far as local circumstances render such extension suitable and subject to modification by Colonial Ordinances.

Petty civil courts (termed 'District Courts') are established in each of the five magisterial districts. Each court is presided over by a Magistrate or District Commissioner who is *ex-officio* judge of the Court.

The jurisdiction is limited to claims not exceeding \$100. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court from any judgment or order of the District Court.

When dealing with cases which can be tried summarily, a Magistrate, District Commissioner or Justice of the Peace exercises jurisdiction under the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinances, and, subject to these Ordinances, has also the powers, privileges, rights and jurisdiction conferred on Justices of the Peace by the Common Law of England. Appeals from the jurisdiction of Magistrates and District Commissioners lie to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of British Honduras is governed by Chapter 153 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, and is presided over by the Chief Justice. The jurisdiction is the same as that of a High Court of Justice in England. Appeal lies from this Court to the Privy Council. The Court holds quarterly sessions at Belize during January, April, July, and October, and at Corozal similar sessions during March, June, September and December.

The number of civil suits issued in the District Court (Civil Jurisdiction) was 515 and, in addition, there were 12 claims for compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1942. A total of \$2,368.10 was awarded to the dependants of the deceased workmen in 2 of the claims, and a total sum of \$2,833.26 was awarded in the remaining 10 claims for partial incapacity.



The total number of criminal and quasi-criminal cases dealt with in the Summary Courts was 1,921 in Belize and 852 in the out-districts, classified as follows:

	<i>Belize</i>	<i>Districts</i>
Homicide .. .. .	6	2
Offences against the person .. .. .	119	86
Offences against property .. .. .	363	65
Malicious injury to Property .. .. .	—	1
Praedial larceny .. .. .	13	5
Other crimes .. .. .	21	27
Offences under Labour Laws .. .. .	2	4
Offences against Laws relating to Revenue, Municipal Road and Social Economy ..	196	257
Petty offences .. .. .	1,201	405
	<hr/> 1,921 <hr/>	<hr/> 852 <hr/>

#### POLICE

##### *Composition*

In 1948 the British Honduras Police Force consisted of 1 Superintendent, 2 Assistant Superintendents and 190 other ranks. Of this amount 168 were employed on regular police duties and 22 on immigration work. Of the 193 members of the Force 168 were born in British Honduras. The Force has its Headquarters in Belize and 120 men are employed at Headquarters. The remaining members of the Force are split up manning 5 District Head Stations and 20 Sub-stations, all of the latter having only one man in each. Police buildings generally are old and antiquated, but are gradually being replaced. Three new sub-stations were built during the year, two as replacements at Douglas and Mullins River and one additional sub-station at Santa Elena. The building formerly known as the Roosevelt Hotel building which adjoins the Police Compound in Belize was acquired by the department and at the close of the year was being renovated prior to being put into use as extra sleeping and messing accommodation and offices. This building will be completed during 1949 and will greatly relieve the present congested Barracks and Office accommodation of Headquarters. In many districts the Police, besides their normal duties, operate the local telephone system and Post Office, and carry out the duties of school officers. This is particularly true in the case of the sub-stations. On account of the scattered positions of the Police Stations, a great deal of patrol work is done by single men on foot, on horseback and by dory. The Police has 21 horses, thinly distributed throughout the colony, and many of the stations have either a paddling or sailing dory attached to them, but transportation, especially in the case of the District Stations and sub-stations, is very difficult.

##### *Prevention and Suppression of Crime*

Lectures and parades are regularly taken by the officers and N.C.O's of the the Force, but the lack of a proper training depot is keenly felt. Three N.C.O's were given a course of training in Jamaica during the year. This consisted

of a course in Court Work, Traffic Work and Social Welfare Work respectively. Fingerprinting apparatus ordered during the previous year arrived and a Fingerprint Bureau has been established. The Fingerprint Record file in connection with this is gradually being increased and has already proven its value. Although started late in the year, a case was made at the last session of the Supreme Court and a conviction obtained. This is the first time that a person has been convicted in the colony by the use of his fingerprint in evidence. The Force has a Prisoner's Van, a Police motor car, a Station Waggon and 6 motorcycles. District Head Stations are supplied with a motorcycle in such cases where they have roads in their particular area, and the motorcycles are issued principally for traffic control and traffic checks. Due to the increased number of traffic and the opening of the Belize-Cayo Road, the volume of this work has been increasing steadily. The Force has two motor launches which are used both in the rivers and on the sea. These are exceedingly useful in the prevention and suppression of crime, and as a means of communicating with those portions of the colony which are not connected to Belize by road. Both these launches are very old, and as a result, are constantly breaking down and having to be repaired. New launches are badly needed and it is hoped that the department may be able to secure one or more when these present launches have reached the stage beyond repair. Mounted patrols in the districts do useful work and are particularly useful in getting about to the various villages in which there is no Police Station.

### *Prevalence of Crime*

There was an increase in crime generally over the same period for 1948 and these are as follows:

There were 5 cases of murder, 4 of attempted murder and 6 of manslaughter; grievous harm to the person 182 cases, an increase of 16. Dangerous drugs 21, showed a marked increase of 14. Praedial larceny with 16 cases for the year showed an increase of 4, and stealing with a figure of 273 involving 335 persons increased by 35. Gambling (local lotteries) decreased from 76 to 49 involving 60 persons. House-breaking 27, showed an increase of 7. Traffic offences decreased by 31 to a figure of 231 cases for the year. Minor offences dropped from 920 to 862 involving 1,113 persons with a decrease of 58 over the previous year's figures. A total of 2,427 cases were brought before the Courts by the Police involving 2,553 persons. Of this amount 2,129 persons were convicted, 162 were acquitted, *nolle prosequi* in 10 cases was entered and 126 were otherwise dealt with. The 22 men doing immigration work checked in 9,284 passengers into the colony and checked out 9,266 departing passengers. 23 persons were prosecuted on charges against the Immigration Laws, 595 aircraft arrived in the colony and 569 sea vessels during the same period.

### PRISONS

The authorized staff of the Prison Department comprises a Superintendent, a Clerk & Storekeeper, a Senior Warder, a Matron and sixteen warders and seven temporary warders.

Of the six prisons in the Colony, the prison at Belize is the principal. It is used to accommodate all prisoners sentenced for periods over three months. It consists of seventy-eight cells with a female wing of six cells. The prisons in the out-districts are situated in the Towns of Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Punta Gorda and El Cayo. These prisons are staffed by the police personnel; the senior non-commissioned officer being the keeper of prison. District prisons are under the control of the District Commissioner subject to the Superintendent of Prisons.

The figure of 730 persons received into the prisons represents an increase of 163 over the previous year.

There is inadequate accommodation to secure separation of juvenile offenders and they are kept as much as possible from old offenders. Boys under the age of sixteen years who commit offences are sent to the Government Industrial School at the Airport Camp. This school was temporarily closed due to an emergency measure in the early part of the year. Plans for the construction of a new school in the Cayo District is in progress. A part time Probation Officer appointed under the Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1934, and the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance, 1932, supervises convicted juveniles.

At the Principal Prison, the trades of Carpentry, Cabinet work, Tailoring, Mattress-making, Baking, Shoe-making, Book-binding, Tin-smithing and Fibre-craft weaving are taught.

The daily average number of prisoners set to work was eighty-five and their hours of labour averaged eight. Certain gangs of prisoners are employed outside the Prison Compound, cutting grass and growth around government buildings and other government property.

Female prisoners are employed on fibre-beating, washing and mending prisoners' clothes and the production of coconut oil.

## Chapter X: Public Utilities

Public utilities in the Colony are confined to the provision of electricity and telephones. The chief electric power station is operated by the Government in Belize but the small Town Board of Corozal provides electric lighting for its own inhabitants.

The electrical supply system in Belize is three wire direct current, 220 and 110 volts, using overhead lines on poles provided from local pine. Current is supplied by four direct-connected, diesel-driven generating sets of British manufacture, using rotary balancers for the mid-wire. Fuel oil costs twenty-three cents and lubricating oil ninety-eight cents for each imperial gallon; the total cost of oil in 1948 was \$34,145.

Charges for electric current are:

(a) for lighting:

first 50 kw. 20 cents per kw.  
over 50 kw. 15 cents per kw.

- (b) for domestic power:  
8 cents per kw.
- (c) for industrial power:  
3 cents to 7 cents per kw.

Consumers number over 2,600.

Ice is manufactured by the Electrical Department by a five-ton plant of British make and to supply the demand for ice it has been necessary also to operate hired plant of smaller capacity for the past few years. Approximate sales of ice during 1948 were 3,894,610 lb. at a rate of half a cent per lb.

#### TELEPHONES

The telephones are of the magneto type of American manufacture. Overhead cables use the poles provided for the electric wires; the airport, which is ten miles from Belize, is connected by means of a metallic circuit. In Belize there are four 150-line manual switchboards but the towns in the districts have smaller equipment. The trunk lines are copperweld single conductors using ground return. They are:

Belize—Maskall, Orange Walk, Corozal, Consejo	..	109	miles
Belize—Roaring Creek, Cayo, Benque Viejo	.. ..	95	„
Belize—Stann Creek, Sittee, Monkey River	.. ..	90	„
Belize—Hill Bank (Belize Estate & Produce Co. Ltd.)		45	„

There are 498 telephones connected to the Belize Exchange and 119 telephones on the trunk lines.

Charges for telephones are:

Business	desk	\$12.00	each	quarter
	wall	\$11.50	„	„
Private	desk	\$ 7.00	„	„
	wall	\$ 6.50	„	„
Out-district telephones		\$ 7.50	„	„

Charges are:

- (a) for inland telegrams: two cents a word with a minimum charge of thirty cents.
- (b) for trunk calls: forty cents for each five-minute period.

## Chapter XI: Communications

Up to a decade ago, almost the only means of communication in the Colony were the sea, the rivers and a number of bush trails. It is inevitable that these means will continue to play an important part in the life of the Colony; they must be used for the transportation of supplies to the settlements on the banks of the rivers, for no road scheme could contemplate linking up all the scattered communities.

#### RIVERS

The Belize River, which has always been the most important for logging purposes, is navigable, almost to the frontier with Guatemala, by doreys

and other light craft for the greater part of the year, but, at all times, considerable ingenuity must be exercised to negotiate the numerous 'runs'.

#### THE SEA

Coastal villages in Southern Districts are served by a twice-weekly sailing from Belize of a small motor vessel, which, once a week also connects with the port of Puerto Cortes in Honduras to deliver and collect much of the surface foreign mails of the Colony. Regular services are similarly maintained to the Northern District settlements. Ships of the United Fruit Co. transport provisions and merchandise every two or three weeks from New Orleans but the passenger service which operated before the war has not, as yet, been resumed. Small schooners provide a regular weekly service between Belize and the Florida port of Tampa. Ships from the United Kingdom have begun to call at monthly intervals, and there are fortnightly sailings between Jamaica and the Colony. The ships entering the Colony in 1948 numbered 810 with a tonnage of 237,683 compared with 935 in 1947 with a tonnage of 189,905.

Four steamship lines operated to the Colony during the year, particulars being as follows:—

<i>Line</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Frequency of Call</i>
United Fruit Co.	New Orleans, U.S.A.	Monthly
T. & J. Harrison Ltd. London	Liverpool and London	Monthly
Royal Netherlands Steamship Co.	Europe <i>via</i> Cristobal, Puerto Cortez and Puerto Barrios	Monthly
Cayman Island Shipping Co.	Kingston, Jamaica	Fortnightly

Of the above lines only the ships of the Cayman Island Shipping Co. take passengers. Passengers proceeding to the United States and places beyond travel by air. There is regular and frequent communication with the neighbouring Republics. No mail contract has been entered into by any of the lines.

#### ROADS

Road-making is a difficult and costly process in most areas; in coastal districts swamps are the chief obstacle; inland, dense undergrowth is a difficulty. Until roads reach the hills of the interior, where quarries can be opened, stone is not easily obtained.

Prior to 1935, there were only thirty-five miles of 'all-weather' roads in the Colony which were considered at that date to be suitable for motor traffic. Today there are 226 miles of main roads (including the recently completed Belize to Cayo road) and 51 miles of feeder roads, all suitable for motor traffic. In addition there are approximately 48 miles of cart roads, some of which can be used by motor cars during the dry season, and 154 miles of government maintained bush trails.

#### AIR SERVICES

The Airport for the Colony was constructed some ten miles to the west of Belize in 1943 and 1944, and the cost was met from a Colonial Development

and Welfare Grant. The airfield is officially named 'Stanley Field' to mark the association of Colonel Oliver Stanley, who as Secretary of State for the Colonies 'opened' the Terminal Building in January, 1945.

There is a grass airfield at Corozal which is available to light aircraft only. The one at Cayo has been officially closed. A landing strip privately owned by the Belize Estate & Produce Company is located at Mango Creek near Point Placencia in the Stann Creek District. Several flights were made to this area during the year by Transportes Aereo Centro Americano (TACA).

No scheduled local flights occurred during 1948. However, in connection with investigations in the crawfish industry, Aerial Sea Food and Catalina Traders Co., carried out a number of flights to the Cayes.

As a result of Guatemala closing her border TACA had to suspend international flights. In consequence there are no scheduled direct flights to the U.S.A. Later, TACA suspended all services and it was not until November 15th that they resumed flights. They now operate a thrice weekly service to San Pedro Sula using Lockheed 14's.

British West Indian Airways, formerly British International Airways Limited, maintain a weekly service from and to Kingston, Jamaica, with Lockheed Lodestar equipment.

Transportes Aereo Mexicano, S.A. (TAMSA) operate a bi-weekly scheduled passenger and mail service between Belize, Chetumal and Merida whence a connecting plane to New Orleans is available.

Skytrain Airways Inc., an international air cargo line, made a number of direct charter flights from New Orleans during the year. There were also a number of itinerants who stopped for refuelling.

Movements of international flights to and from Belize number 1,206.

#### POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

There are 30 post offices in the Colony. In 1948, the number of articles dealt with was 825,321. The value of internal money and postal order business amounted to \$81,699, and to \$140,137 for external transactions.

Telephone offices, which also transact telegraph business, number 72. The local telegraph system is connected by cable across the Rio Hondo with Chetumal, by means of which telegraph business is transacted through Mexico with other countries.

There is a wireless station in Belize for the transaction daily of radio-telegraph business with stations in other countries—Stony Hill, Jamaica; Guatemala City, Mexico City and New Orleans. Transmitting and receiving equipment, which provide aeronautical telecommunications service, are also installed at the Belize Airport. Excluding messages relating to the conduct of the service, weather reports, and press messages, 13,978 radio telegrams were transmitted and 14,101 were received in 1948.

Items of news interest and forecast for the Western Caribbean are broadcast daily at 12.30 p.m. from the Belize Wireless Station, ZIK2, on a wavelength of 28.31 metres. Storm and hurricane warnings are broadcast during the hurricane season from June to November.

The charges on radiograms to Great Britain, Eire, British West Indies, Bermuda, British Guiana, Canada, Newfoundland and to all points in the United States of America are as follows:

Ordinary (Full Rate)	..	..	per word	20 cents	
Code (C D E)	..	..	..	12 cents	
Deferred (L C)	..	..	..	10 cents	
Night Letter (N L T)	..	..	..	6½ cents	Minimum
					25 words
(G L T)	..	..	..	6½ cents	Minimum
					12 words
Press U.K. (Press)	..	..	..	2 cents	
U.S.A. (Press)	..	..	..	6½ cents	

#### PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works other than roads completed during the year included the construction of quarters for the Agricultural Officer at Baking Pot Estate near Cayo; Quarters and Office for Customs Officer and Quarters for Ferryman at Santa Helena, two quarters for Junior Officers at Stann Creek and two at Punta Gorda; new Police Stations at Douglas and Mullins River, Quarters for Rural Nurse at Progreso, purchase and renovation of the 'Roosevelt Hotel' to provide increased barrack accommodation for Police Department; construction of a Drying floor at Orange Walk for the Department of Agriculture and the laying of a Hard Standing in front of the Terminal Building, Belize Airport.

Colonial Development and Welfare projects in hand during the year included the construction of the Belize Cayo Road, the construction of the Cayo Suspension Bridge, the construction of the Belize Hector Creek Road and the provision of a temporary water supply for Belize.

The bituminous surfacing of the Belize-Cayo Road, was completed. On the Cayo Suspension Bridge the two piers were completed and the abutments including the anchorage chambers completed to road level. The steel work for one of the 100' approach spans was assembled in position.

Construction of the Belize-Hector Creek Road which reduces the distance to Cayo by 12 miles made good progress. 90% of the earthworks was completed and five miles of bituminous surface at the Hector Creek end was laid.

On the temporary Water Supply for Belize, the engine and pump for the well at 11 mile was purchased and installed and six miles of 6" water main laid and jointed.

#### Communications

A new Ferry was constructed for use over the Rio Hondo at Santa Helena giving direct communication between the Colony and Mexico.

## **Chapter XII: Lands and Survey**

Twenty sheets of the aerial survey of approximately 5,000 sq. miles of the northern section of the Colony have been produced in one colour as a provisional edition on a scale of 1/50,000. These sheets have been in great demand by the various Departments of the Colony and several complete sets have been supplied to the Evans Commission and the military authorities.

A limited number of these sheets have also been supplied to the general public.



## PART III

### Chapter I: Geography and Climate

British Honduras, 5,700 miles from the United Kingdom and 600 miles west of its better-known sister colony of Jamaica, lies on the mainland of Central America facing eastwards across the Caribbean Sea. With an area of 8,598 square miles, it is approximately the same size as Wales, and nearly twice the size of Jamaica. The Colony lies between North latitudes of  $18^{\circ} 29' 5''$  and  $15^{\circ} 53' 55''$  and between West longitudes of  $89^{\circ} 9' 22''$  and  $88^{\circ} 10'$ . To the North and North-west, the frontier with Mexico is formed by the River Hondo. The frontier with the only other neighbouring republic, Guatemala, is, in the south, the River Sarstoon from the Gracias a Dios Falls to the sea, while a line drawn from these falls to Garbutt's Falls on the Belize River and thence due North to the Mexican frontier on the Hondo forms the western boundary. The greatest length of the Colony from North to South is about 174 miles with a greatest width from East to West of approximately 68 miles. The coast of British Honduras is very well sheltered from the rough seas of the Caribbean by an almost continuous line of coral reefs and 'cays' lying at distances of from ten to forty miles from the mainland. The harbour of Belize is almost surrounded by sheltering reefs—a factor which has done much to promote the growth of the port as the most important in the Colony. North of Belize, coastal waters are unusually shallow with a general depth of not more than six feet. At Commerce Bight, three miles south of the town of Stann Creek, the deepest water in the Colony is found and until the pier was destroyed by a severe storm in 1941, medium sized, ocean going, vessels were able to berth alongside. For the most part, coastal lands are low and swampy and the northern part of the Colony is flat, large areas of land rising very little above sea level.

In the area south of Belize, there is a central mountain massif of a general elevation of 2,000—3,000 feet above sea level, comprising on the east, the Maya Mountain Range, and on the west, an area of pine ridge over 120 square miles in extent. The Maya Mountains, which include the Cockscorn Spur, possessing a peak of over 3,700 feet, are by no means fully explored, and difficulties of terrain are such as to make expeditions for detailed survey very costly.

The pine ridge provides some of the best scenery in the Colony, and the large tracts of open space suggest attractions for the tourist. Remoteness from rivers and roads would render the extraction of the pine an uneconomic proposition.

Numerous rivers, not all of which are easily navigable by any kind of craft, provided until recent times almost the only means of communication with the interior: the most important, the Belize River, can be negotiated in all but the very dry months by specially constructed motor boats of shallow draught, for 120 miles upstream. No thorough survey of the soil of the Colo-

ny has yet been made but it is believed that there are several uncultivated areas where profitable agriculture could be carried on, and there are similar hopes that a geological survey would not be found unproductive.

#### CLIMATE

In its climate, British Honduras is certainly favoured. Trade winds, blowing from the sea over a great part of the year, keep temperatures down, in coastal areas, to a level below that of such cities as New York and Washington in the summer months. Even in the hotter months of May to October the shade temperatures do not go over 96°. Inland, in the Western District, day temperatures may exceed 100° but cooler nights are experienced. During cold spells, which may occur between November and February, the temperature may go down in Belize to 50° though the mean for this period is nearer 70°.

Rainfall shows some sharp annual variations but the mean over the last five years is sixty inches in Belize, which is also typical of what would be regarded as a normal year. Average rainfall in the North is no more than about sixty inches while in the Southern District the yearly average is nearer 175 inches.

The climate of the Colony, which in the cooler months is particularly delightful, is quite suitable for people used to temperate zones and little, if any, impairment to health is suffered from prolonged residence. The high 3,000 feet plateau of the mountain pine ridge is quite suitable as a hill station, a project which may be realized when the major road programme is accomplished.

## Chapter II: History of British Honduras

The incompleteness and the paucity of many of the records from which the history of British Honduras has to be gathered make research fascinating, but, at times, rather exasperating. The humidity of the climate has not favoured the storage of documents, but such as remain provide stories with a Ballantyne flavour of adventure.

Of the early settlement of the Colony by Maya Indians, much remains to be told; but there is ample evidence of considerable Mayan settlements all over the Colony which indicate that a population much greater than that existing at present was supported, though on a much lower standard. For the archaeologist, there is wealth of material to be unearthed.

Here, we are concerned with the history of the Colony following the discoveries in the Western Hemisphere in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Columbus is thought to have sailed down the coast in 1502, when he set out from Cuba to find a passage to the Indies.

The first Britons to set foot in the country are believed to have sailed from Jamaica about 1638. Finding abundant supplies of logwood, then much in demand for the manufacture of dyes in Europe, they began a settle-

ment which was maintained with fluctuating fortunes through 150 years of struggle and strife with the Spanish. It appeared that friendly relations and treaties between Britain and Spain made no difference to the local struggle and it was not until 1798 that an end to the skirmishes could be written.

By 1670 when Spain made a treaty ceding to Britain all lands in the West Indies and in any part of America held by the British, the settlement, near the mouth of the Belize River and at St. George's Cay, an island some ten miles east of the river mouth, included 700 white settlers, among whom was the famous Admiral John Benbow. About this time, the prosperity of the settlement was brought to the notice of King Charles II by a report of the Governor of Jamaica that it had 'increased His Majesty's Customs and the natural commerce more than any of His Majesty's Colonies'.

An early reference to slaves was included in a report of an attack by the Spanish some distance inland at Labouring Creek in 1754, when it was said that, principally by their efforts, the raiders were repulsed. In 1779, the Spanish seem to have had some success when they captured and carried away a great many of the settlers at St. George's Cay. Subsequently, after suffering ill-treatment in Mexico and Cuba, the captives were allowed to return. A further development occurred in 1786, when, by the Treaty of London, Great Britain gave up her claims to the Mosquito Coast in return for Spanish recognition of the existing settlement in British Honduras, but this arrangement seems either not to have been brought to the notice of, or to have been disregarded by, the Spanish in the Caribbean area, as the attacks continued. In their final effort in 1798, they appear to have employed larger forces than ever before and little attention seems to have been given to achieving surprise for the local settlers had time for a number of parleys and to gather together their forces inferior in point of fighting strength. The action at St. George's Cay was decisive and final and, today, the anniversary is honoured by a public holiday accompanied by patriotic celebrations.

Events in Mexico from 1848 to 1867 had their repercussions in British Honduras, for the rebellion of the Indians of Yucatan in 1849 caused many Spaniards to settle in the northern part of the Colony. When in 1867 Mexico finally overthrew the Spanish administration, Indians made repeated raids into the Colony until a garrison of Imperial Troops finally made such incursions unremunerative.

From the very first beginnings of the settlement, until recent times, a greater measure of freedom to manage their own affairs appears to have been accorded to the people of British Honduras than was given to the settlers in other colonies. Until 1786, persons were appointed at an annual public meeting to act as Magistrates, on whom the responsibility of discharging executive and judicial functions devolved.

The King in 1765 gave a 'constitution to the people' founded on their ancient customs, the most important of which were legislating by public meetings and the election of magistrates annually by the free suffrage of the people. Admiral Sir William Burnaby, accompanied by Captain Cook,

was sent to the Colony to codify the laws and customs and to arrange for the inhabitants of the Colony to be put into full possession of their lands and associated rights.

Following the declaration of the settlement as a Colony in 1862, a Lieutenant-Governor, subordinate to the Governor of Jamaica, was appointed, and in 1870 he became the President of a newly constituted Legislative Assembly, the composition of which included five official, and not less than four unofficial members.

Independence of Jamaica came in 1884 with the appointment of a Governor and a Commander-in-Chief.

The economic disaster, following a hurricane which overwhelmed Belize and the adjacent countryside in 1931, necessitated the seeking of the aid of the Imperial Exchequer and the subsequent surrender of the control of finance. As a result, major changes in the constitution were made in 1935 by the passing of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance, 1935, and, after amendments to this Ordinance in 1938 and 1945, the Legislative Council now consists of the Governor, as President, three official and ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated and six elected from five constituencies. The Governor was given power, in certain circumstances, to assent to any bill which the Council failed to pass.

The main economy of British Honduras has been based, since the first settlement, on her forests. By the time the demand for logwood declined, the mahogany tree had already become a more profitable export and it has remained for a century the principal forest product. Other exports from the forest have centred upon cedar, pine and the sapodilla tree, from which chicle gum is extracted. Coconuts have also been an important export.

With a forest tradition ingrained in him, the average British Honduran has not taken heed of exhortations to settle on the land, and indeed the experiences of some of the settlers have not been encouraging, for most of them have only eked out a meagre living. Bananas were flourishing when the Stann Creek railway project was begun in 1905 to improve transportation, but an imported disease has relegated banana growing to an insignificant position.

The citrus industry in the Stann Creek Valley is now well established and although during the latter half of the war a government subsidy to growers became necessary, due to temporary loss of markets, the original position had been regained toward the end of 1946. A sugar factory, erected in the sugar cane growing area in the northern plain in 1935, has not been productive of a high grade sugar, and it has not supplied, in entirety, the requirements of the Colony. Rum distilleries in the same neighbourhood produce a spirit which has only a local market.

The social development of the peoples of British Honduras has not, on the whole, been characterized by the sudden spurts which appear to have marked progress in other countries; rather, to the casual observer, has it been by almost imperceptible change year by year. The Education Ordinance of 1892

established a Board of Education, with the Governor as Chairman, to promote education, to provide for the administration of schools, and to allot grants in aid from funds voted by the legislature. In 1915 the Governor with the consent of the Board was empowered to declare compulsory school attendance areas. Noteworthy improvements in the standard of teaching recently have followed the provision of better training facilities and stimulation has come from the institution of annual Teachers' Vacation Courses.

Public Health appears to have received its chief impetus in the latter half of the last century, but administrators of the Public Health Ordinances are always somewhat discouraged by the absence of proper water supplies and sewerage systems. An improved water supply for Belize is being installed.

It was not until 1945 that a Social Welfare Officer was appointed, and he was gravely handicapped by the absence of any voluntary organizations on which he could found the nucleus of a Social Welfare Scheme. There were no handicrafts, no co-operative or marketing unions, and no village community centres; but there were Credit Unions, the first of which was established only a short time before he arrived. With the return from Jamaica of an officer sent for handicraft training, handicrafts were introduced to the main institutions, the Prison, the Mental Hospital and the Industrial School for boys, which has been established in the Stann Creek Valley in 1926. With the resignation of the first Social Welfare Officer, a Social Welfare and Development Officer was appointed and social Welfare work was associated with the development of the Colony.

## Chapter III: Administration

The administration and government of the Colony devolve upon the Governor and an Executive Council, constituted by Royal Instructions given in 1936 and in 1945, and providing for three *ex-officio* members and of such persons, as the Governor may appoint in accordance with the instructions. At the close of the year, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary were the *ex-officio* members and there were four other appointments. Appointments are for a period of three years.

The Legislative Council, in its present form, is constituted by the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance of 1935 together with the amendment Ordinance of 1945; the composition, with the Governor as President, being three *ex-officio* members (the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary, and the Attorney General) ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated by the Governor in pursuance of Royal Instructions received in 1936 and 1945, and six elected from five constituencies, there being two members for the Belize District.

All questions are decided by a majority of the votes given, the Governor having an original, and also a casting vote, but of the greatest interest to Un-

official Members of the Council is the provision in the 1935 enactment of what are described as the Governor's reserve powers, which, briefly, give him the authority to declare his assent to any bill, resolution or vote, which he considers necessary in the interests of public order or good government, or to secure detailed control of the finances of the Colony, while financial assistance is being received from His Majesty's Exchequer. In making any such declaration, the Governor is required to inform the Council of his reasons and to report his action to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Governor may refuse to give his assent to any bill passed by the Legislative Council, or he may reserve his assent for the signification of the approval of His Majesty; no law is effective until it has received his assent.

The Judiciary consists of a Chief Justice and a Magistrate for the City of Belize. In the out-districts judicial functions are exercised by the District Commissioners. In addition, two or more Justices of the Peace may exercise the judicial functions of a District Commissioner. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, who is appointed by Letters Patent under the Public Seal of the Colony by the Governor. One of the officers of the Court is the Registrar General, who has power to administer oaths and take solemn declarations, or affirmations in lieu of oaths.

Justices of the Peace are appointed by the Governor by Warrant under his hand and under Public Seal; they may be appointed for the whole Colony, or for a district, or for a portion of a district. Similarly they may be removed by warrant.

Administratively the Colony is divided into five districts, of which the Belize District, containing the capital, has the largest population. The other districts are the Northern with headquarters at Corozal, the Western, whose administrative headquarters are at El Cayo, the Stann Creek District administered from Stann Creek town, and the Toledo District in the South with Punta Gorda as the only important town. The Commissioner for each district, excepting Belize, exercises the prescribed judicial functions and acts, at the same time, as Sub-Treasurer, Sub-Collector of Customs and District Postmaster. Except in one district the Commissioner is also chairman of the local Town Board.

Town Boards are constituted under the District Town Boards Ordinance of 1938, which gives power to the Governor in Council to add to, or delete from, the list of towns to which the Ordinance applies. Boards may be either wholly nominated, or partly nominated and partly elected: nominated members are appointed by the Governor.

A Town Board is required to meet each quarter and at such other times as required by its rules or when convened by the Chairman, who is appointed either by the Governor or from one of their number as he may direct. It is entrusted with the duty of attending to the good government of the town, and it may establish markets, slaughter-houses, baths and washhouses, may provide for public lighting, the naming and numbering of its streets, and carry on such other duties as the Governor orders by notice in the *Gazette*.

## Chapter IV: Weights and Measures

The standard Imperial Weights and Measures are prescribed by the Weights and Measures Ordinance, Chapter 63 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, which places on the Superintendent of Police the duties of inspection of weights and measures at least once in every three months.

The legal standards to be used are:

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| (a) for articles sold by weight                     | .. .. | Imperial troy and avoirdupois                             |
| (b) for capacity (liquids and dry goods)            |       | Imperial gallon   |
| (c) for capacity (goods usually sold by the bushel) | .. .. | Bushel of eight Imperial gallons or 80 pounds avoirdupois |
| (d) for extension                                   | .. .. | Standard yard measure of 36 inches.                       |

A copy or model of the standards must be kept in the office of each District Commissioner and inspections are to be made at least once in every three months.

## Chapter V: Newspapers and Periodicals

There are two newspapers published in the Colony, the *Daily Clarion*, a small one sheet evening issue and the *Belize Billboard*, a bi-weekly issue.

For official purposes, the *Government Gazette* is issued weekly and is available to private subscribers on payment of an annual subscription of five dollars.

There are no other regular publications and, in the main, people of British Honduras rely upon the wireless set and certain weekly American publications for their news of the world.

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*Cover illustration: Mahogany Logs*

# REPORT ON BRITISH HONDURAS 1949.

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# **PART I**

## **General Review**

1949 proved to be a very difficult year for British Honduras. The most disastrous drought in living memory, coupled with a decline in the mahogany and chicle industries, led to the widespread distress and unemployment, particularly in the Belize, Cayo and Northern Districts. Unemployment relief work was started in these districts in August and continued up to the end of the year. When the pound was devalued against the United States dollar in September, the currency of British Honduras alone in the Colonial Empire remained unaltered, and the British Honduras dollar, continuing at parity with the United States dollar, changed in value against sterling from \$4.03 to \$2.80 to the £. While this reacted favourably upon the cost of living, sterling investors reduced or suspended their activities owing to the unfavourable rate of exchange, and the development and economic life of the Colony were brought to a standstill. This inevitably aggravated the already existing unemployment situation referred to above, and the attempt to hold the situation had to be abandoned in face of the dire effects on the economy of the Colony, the general lack of confidence in the high rate of exchange of the dollar, and the blighting of all prospects of future development by which alone the Colony can resume a healthy economic life. Accordingly on the last day of the year the British Honduras dollar was linked to sterling at the rate of \$4.00 to the £. This measure had to be put into effect by an alteration in the British Honduras Currency Notes Ordinance. The Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council all voted against the bill, and the Governor was therefore compelled, with reluctance, to declare the measure passed under the power conferred upon him by section 15 of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance (No. 13 of 1935).

In the early part of the year it seemed that an early start could be made with the institution of measures for the development of the Colony on the lines recommended in the Evans Commission Report, although, as already stated, these hopes were later set back by the devaluation crisis. The Secretary of State had announced at the end of 1948 that a sum of £2,000,000 had been set aside to enable an early start to be made on some of the recommendations in the Evans Report for the development of British Guiana and British Honduras, and it was later ascertained that the British Honduras share of this sum was £850,000. Following a combined meeting of the Executive and Legislative Councils on the 14th February, the Governor appointed a body known as the British Honduras Development Board, the primary function of which is to bring under review and to integrate the various plans for the development of the Colony. The Board is constituted as follows:—

The Governor, Chairman  
 The Colonial Secretary  
 The Financial Secretary  
 One Unofficial Member of Executive Council  
 Two Unofficial Members of Legislative Council  
 One Member nominated by the Belize City Council  
 One Member nominated by the Marketing Board  
 One Member nominated by the Chamber of Commerce.

It is the intention that the powers and duties of the Board shall be defined by statute, but initially it is felt that the Board can best operate on informal lines and that the question of legislation can be left over for later consideration.

The principal development schemes approved by the Secretary of State during the year were:—

	£
Reclamation of land north of Belize	1,750
Reconstruction of streets of Belize	3,200
Housing Scheme for Belize	10,000
Agricultural Development at Baking Pot Estate	19,450

In considering the use to be made of the sum of £850,000 made available for Evans development projects, the Development Board came to the conclusion that the greater part of these funds ought to be devoted to the improvement of the communications of the Colony. A sum of £500,000 was therefore earmarked for road development.

The Colonial Development Corporation examined a number of schemes, of which the most important were the building of an hotel in Belize, and the production of cocoa and bananas. The Corporation also investigated the possibility of large scale rice production on the lines recommended by Mr. Gerald Lacey, who visited the Colony specially to advise on this matter. By the end of the year the Corporation had not commenced operations in this field, but exploratory work was continuing.

The Government embarked during the year on an important policy of encouraging private development by the grant of exemption from customs duty and income tax concessions to approved development undertakings. These concessions are embodied in Statutory Instruments Nos. 53 and 54 of 1949.

Apart from developments in the Stann Creek Valley by the Citrus Company of British Honduras Ltd. among the more encouraging events was the application by and grant to the Gulf Oil Corporation of a licence to explore oil possibilities throughout the entire Colony and its adjacent waters. Actual operations, which had not begun by the end of the year, are to be conducted by the Bahamas Oil Corporation, a British subsidiary of Gulf.

The Constitutional Reform Commission completed its investigations except for a visit to Gallon Jug, which will be undertaken when possible.

Thereafter it is hoped that the report will not be long delayed. The Attorney General, who is Chairman of the Commission, left the Colony on vacation leave (subsequently on transfer) and his place as Chairman of the Commission has been taken by the Honourable W. H. Courtenay, O.B.E.

The dispute with Guatemala remained in a state of stalemate, but a debate which took place in the Legislative Council in July, deploring the adverse effects upon the development of the Colony arising out of the uncertainty caused in the minds of strangers by the Guatemalan Government's propaganda campaign, crystallized local feeling in the matter; and His Majesty's Government later made it absolutely clear in a Note to the Guatemalan Government that it was prepared to take the dispute to the International Court at the Hague on a legal basis only.

The following honours were conferred upon British Honduras residents:—

*New Year*

Mr. C. M. Staine, J.P., to be an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Company Sergeant Major W. P. Burrows, British Honduras Volunteer Guard, to be a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

*King's Birthday*

Mr. A. O. Longworth, Registrar General, to be a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

His Excellency the Governor, Mr. R. H. Garvey, C.M.G., M.B.E., arrived in the Colony and assumed duty on the 28th January.

## PART II

### Chapter I: Population

At a Census taken in April, 1946, the population of the Colony was 59,220, and at the end of 1949 it was estimated to be 65,354, comprising 28,722 males and 30,498 females. Intermixing is such that racial classification of the population is difficult and unreliable, but it may be said that the Northern and Western Districts are inhabited principally by the descendants of Spanish and Maya Indian peoples. In the Capital, the 'Creoles' (descendants of the early settlers) are in the majority though there are a large number of people of Latin extraction from the neighbouring republics, and of Syrians and Chinese. There is a limited number of Europeans and United States nationals. There is in the Southern Districts of Stann Creek and Toledo, a predominance of Caribs but Maya Indians have some large settlements in the extreme South.

The estimated population was distributed in the Districts of the Colony as follows:

<i>District</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Area in Square Miles</i>	<i>Persons per Square Mile</i>
Belize .. ..	29,400	1,623	18.11
Northern .. ..	13,656	2,180	6.26
Stann Creek ..	6,970	840	8.29
Toledo .. ..	6,861	2,125	3.22
Cayo .. ..	8,467	1,830	4.62
<hr/>			
The Colony ..	65,354	8,598	7.60

The population of the leading towns at the 1946 Census was as follows:

	<i>Persons</i>
Belize .. ..	21,886
Corozal .. ..	2,190
Orange Walk ..	1,395
Cayo .. ..	1,548
Benque Viejo ..	1,264
Stann Creek ..	3,414
Punta Gorda ..	1,375.

A review of the 1931 and 1946 census figures shows increases in the population of all the Districts except the Northern, which declined 3.81 per cent., although the preponderance of births over deaths from year to year during the intervening period would have led one to expect an increase. This position rather supports the general view of a trend to concentration in Belize due to the exodus, from the agriculturally important Northern District, of small-planters, who, it is common belief, have forsaken the land in search of more lucrative occupations. The slightest margin of increase is to be observed in the Toledo District (2.42 per cent.), which is no doubt due partly to abnormal death rates throughout the years 1931 to 1946, (which reached the alarming figure of 53.6 in 1945), and partly to migration from the District of its residents in search of employment.

Births per thousand of the population dropped from 39.68 in 1948 to 38.90. Deaths per thousand were recorded at 13.41 as against 13.63 in 1948. The infantile mortality rate is highest in the Toledo District with its large Maya population, which recorded rates of over 27 per cent. In 1944 and in 1945, but declined to just under 19 in 1946, to 16.5 in 1947 and further to 15.68 in 1948. The rate increased in 1949 and is recorded at 17.91. The lowest rate recorded is that of Cayo—6.75. The rates in the other Districts are as follows: Belize 8.09; Northern 12.10; Stann Creek 8.79 and for the Colony 10.48.

## Chapter II: Occupations, Wages, Labour Organization

### PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS

In British Honduras the employment available in the forest industries, the mainstay of the Colony's economy, is largely seasonal, timber extraction operations being principally confined to the first six months of the year when the dry weather permits logging over primitive roads, while chicle bleeding is carried out in the wet months, July to February, as rains induce a good flow of gum from the trees.

A statement of the particulars of the employment in the principal occupations on the 31st December, 1949, follows:—

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<b>PRIMARY PRODUCTION</b>				
<i>Mahogany</i> Labourers	207	\$20.00 to \$23.00 per month plus rations at \$2.50 per week	50	Employment usually seasonal from October to June.
Tractor and Truck Drivers	35	\$60.00 to \$75.00 per month and rations at \$3.50 per week		
Other Workers	90	\$30.00 a month and rations at \$3.50 per week		
	332			
<i>Pine and other secondary woods</i> Labourers working in the forests at felling, etc.	196	\$1.60 a day		

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
Tractor and Truck Drivers	43	\$50.00 to \$65.00 a month	50	
Other Workers	18	\$1.50 per day		
<i>Chicle</i>	257			
Bleeders, Muleteers and others	915	30¢ a lb. for Crown Gum 35¢ a lb. for Superior Gum	50	
	915			
<i>Agriculture</i>				
Cane Fields	195	\$1.00 a day	48	
	195			
<b>SECONDARY PRODUCTION</b>				
Sawmills				
Supervisors and clerical workers	66	\$2.75 to \$5.00 a day		
Machinery attendants and operators	143	\$2.00 to \$5.00 a day	56	
Labourers handling lumber	381	\$1.30 to \$1.80 a day		
	543			
<i>Factories and other Industrial Establishments</i>				
Aerated Water				
Males	32	\$2.50 to \$12.00 per week	45	
Females	31	do.		
Cigarettes				
Males	19	\$3.00 to \$14.00 per week		
Females	20	\$4.00 to \$12.00 per week		
Packing fresh grapefruit				
Males	76			
Females	51			
Canning grapefruit juice				
Males	124	\$1.20 to \$3.00 per day	48	
Females	42			
Ice				
Males	6	\$1.00 to \$1.50 a day	48	

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
Soap Males	12	\$9.00 to \$20.00 per week	45	
Females	1	\$8.00 per week		
Sugar Males	46	\$1.50 to \$2.75 a day	54	
Bakeries	45	\$3.00 to \$18.00 per week	50	
Blacksmith and repair machine shops	45	\$8.00 to \$25.00 per week		
Cabinet Shops	45	\$2.25 to \$3.00 per day	48	
Printing Establishments	40	\$3.00 to \$15.00 per week	48	
Shoe repairing & manufacturing shops	85	\$6.00 to \$24.00 per week	48	
Tailoring Establishments	46	\$2.50 to \$9.00 per week	48	
Tinsmith shops	5			
	771			
Boat Building & Repairing	75	15¢ to 47¢ per hour	48	
Public Works Dept.				
Road Labourers	746	\$1.58 to \$1.82 a day		
Lorry Drivers	49	\$2.32 to \$2.64 a day		
Carpenters and Painters	56	\$2.00 to \$3.68 a day		
Other Tradesmen	169	\$2.64 to \$4.32 a day	48	
	1,020			
<b>SERVICES</b>				
Transport of goods by sea				
(i) Handling general cargo	90	30¢ per hour and free food		Intermittent employment averaging 6 days a month
(ii) Stevedore handling logs for export	60	50¢ to 75¢ per hour		
(iii) Dock Labourers	75	29¢ per hour		
	225			

Industry or Occupation	*Number employed	Average Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<i>Forest Department Labourers</i>				
Males	182	\$1.00 to \$1.68 a day	48	
Females	2	Average earnings		
	184	\$1.00 a day		
<i>Health Department Labourers</i>	35	\$1.45 to \$1.66 a day		
Cartmen	7	\$1.51 to \$1.92 a day	44	
Vehicle Drivers	3	\$2.19 to \$2.50 a day		
	45			
<i>Belize City Council Labourers</i>	20	\$1.74 to \$2.50 a day		
Other Workers	10	\$1.60 to \$2.75 a day	48	
	30			
<i>Agricultural Dept. Labourers</i>	48	\$1.65 to \$1.76 a day	48	
	48			

\*Males unless otherwise stated.

### Cost of Living

From a survey held by the Labour Department in 1942 embracing 100 working class families in Belize it was found that price levels were then 34.7 above pre-war conditions and that the average amounts paid out weekly under the main groups of household expenditure were as follows:

Food .. .. .	\$7.00
Clothing .. .. .	1.37
Rent .. .. .	1.20
Fuel, Light and Washing ..	0.98
Other Items .. .. .	2.30
	<hr/>
	\$12.95

The approximate cost on the 1st October, 1949, of maintaining, unchanged, the 1942 standards of living was \$19.50.

The trend of the cost of living during 1949 is shown by the indices hereunder:

1st January .. ..	211
1st April .. ..	205
1st July .. ..	204
1st October .. ..	203



No accurate records are available as to the cost of living for Europeans but the rates for hotels and boarding houses vary from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a day, and from \$80.00 to \$100.00 a month.

#### LABOUR ORGANIZATION

##### *Size and Work of the Labour Department.*

The Labour Department was established in 1939 and its duties follow closely those of similar departments in other colonies. Its regular staff consists of the Labour Officer, a Labour Inspector, one Second Class Clerk and an office messenger. Owing to increased work on the inception of Relief work for the unemployed during August a temporary clerk was engaged to attend to the keeping of records relating to the unemployed.

##### *Trade Unions*

There were five trade unions on the register during 1949. Particulars of these and their reported memberships on the 31st December, 1948, are:—

(a) The British Honduras General Workers Union (formed in 1939), a general union of all classes of workers, including domestic servants. Its headquarters are in Belize, and with its six branches in the District areas the number of financial members was reported as 1,818, of whom 125 were females.

(b) The Carpenters, Cabinet Makers and Painters Union, established in 1944, whose membership is restricted to the classes of workers named. The number of financial members was stated to be 61.

(c) The National Labour Union, which was registered during 1947, with 227 financial members. This Union is confined to labourers only, but its Rules provide for the admission of other classes of workers if it can be proven that they cannot obtain membership with any other trade union.

(d) The British Honduras Civil Service Association which was originally formed in 1922, and became a registered trade union on the 26th January, 1948. There were 386 names on the roll of members

(e) The British Honduras Mercantile Clerks Union of shop assistants, and clerical workers, which was registered on the 14th July, 1948. The paid-up membership was stated to be 142, inclusive of 69 females.

No associations of employers have yet been formed.

##### *Labour Disputes*

One trade dispute occurred involving 120 workers at a sugar mill when the employers refused to meet the workers claim for increased wages. This dispute was referred to a Board of Inquiry held during August and as a result of its findings the workers were granted pay increases with retrospective effect from the date of their claim.

A normal number of individual complaints were lodged at and dealt with by the Labour Department: these involved dismissals without notice, failure to pay wages due, illegal deductions from wages, overcharges for goods at camp commissariats, compensation for accidents received in the course of work, and other matters.

### ***Labour Legislation***

The relations between master and servant are controlled by the Employers and Workers Ordinance, No. 6 of 1943, which repealed and replaced previous legislation dating as far back as 1883.

A system of workmen's compensation for accidents sustained during the course of their employment was established in 1943. It follows closely the system in other West Indian colonies. Agricultural workers are included in its scope and insurance is available from various firms operating in the Colony.

The Factories Ordinance, No. 9 of 1942, provides for the maintenance of machinery safeguards and for the regulation of the conditions of employment in factories.

The establishment and registration of Trade Unions is governed by the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, whilst the settlement of trade disputes may be effected by arbitration under the Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance, 1939, when voluntary means fail.

Other ordinances in force govern the practices of recruiting, provide for the fixing of minimum wages, and regulate the employment of women, young persons and children.

There is no legislation to provide for old age pensions, or for relief in cases of sickness. The indigent receive outdoor relief from a charity vote which is administered by the Outdoor Relief Committee and the sick are given free treatment at Government hospitals if they are found to be destitute.

No important changes in labour legislation were made in 1949.

## **Chapter III: Public Finance and Taxation**

### **REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE**

Up to the year 1931, when a disastrous hurricane caused severe damage in Belize and outlying settlements, the Colony had always balanced its budgets but its economy was almost entirely based on the production of mahogany, chicle, and other forest timbers. No roads had been constructed but a railway was operated in the Stann Creek Valley in connection with the banana trade.

After 1931, the revenue from forests declined and, with a heavy burden of loan charges resulting from the raising of a sterling loan of \$900,000 for reconstruction purposes to make good the damage caused by the hurricane, the Colony was unable to balance its budget.

With the exception of 1947, a grant-in-aid from the Imperial Exchequer has been received each year since 1932. Apart from grant-in-aid considerable sums have been devoted to the Colony for the development of communications, for establishing Agriculture, for improving social services, and for the specialised training of local persons. The total sums granted to the Colony up to the end of 1949 may be summarised as follows:—

Grant-in-Aid .....	\$2,320,290	
Loan in Aid .....	748,489	
Railway conversion .....	169,360	
Relief Schemes .....	410,978	
Colonial Development & Welfare grants .....	4,967,369	
Hurricane Loan (write off) .....	428,741	\$9,045,227

Of the 109 Schemes approved up to the end of 1949 for grants either from Colonial Development Fund sources or from funds provided under the Colonial Development & Welfare Act of 1949, and which amount in the aggregate to £1,370,940, 15 have been in respect of communications and amount to £908,570, 20 have been classified under Agriculture and total £85,048 and 6 have been in respect of Water Supplies, Drainage & Irrigation and amount to £98,135.

### 1. Accounts for the Calendar Year 1949.

The surplus brought forward from 1948 amounted to \$66,969 which did not include \$28,076 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. True Revenue for 1949 amounted to \$2,387,241, while true expenditure was \$2,771,437. At the end of December 1949, there was a deficit of \$69,173 but this did not take into account \$119,725 owing on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. During the year Grants in Aid totalling £95,000 were made by His Majesty's Government and a grant of £106,388 was also received to repay the amount owing by the Colony in respect of the 1931 Hurricane Reconstruction Loan.

#### *Revenue*

The total true revenue of the Colony rose from \$2,505,798 in 1947 to \$2,579,713 in 1948, the figure for 1949 was \$2,387,242.

The decrease in revenue was due to the shortfall in Customs Revenue consequent on the curtailment of imports from "hard currency sources," the decrease in revenue from Internal Taxation following the recession in the Mahogany and Chicle trade, and the payment of receipts accruing from loans made for hurricane reconstruction purposes into a Special Fund. Comparative figures for three years are shown below under the principal heads.

	1947	1948	1949
	\$	\$	\$
Customs, including Surtaxes .....	1,227,026	1,061,040	980,707
Internal Taxation .....	639,150	752,711	771,396
Revenue of Government Property .....	190,670	147,060	98,348
Fees of Court or Office, etc. ....	134,036	179,827	143,133
Self-balancing Revenue (Posts & Telegraphs, Telephones, Electric Power) .....	225,995	330,536	336,399

	1947	1948	1949
	\$	\$	\$
Interest and Sinking Fund of re-payments .....	61,086	80,742	23,510
Miscellaneous .....	27,835	27,797	33,749
<b>True Revenue .....</b>	<b>2,505,798</b>	<b>2,579,713</b>	<b>2,387,242</b>
<b>Receipts from <i>Imperial Funds</i></b>			
Colonial Development & Welfare	435,360	528,160	555,448
Grant-in-aid .....		100,750	339,800
Grant for repayment of 1931 Hurricane Loan .....	—	—	428,743
<b>Total Revenue.....</b>	<b>2,941,158</b>	<b>3,208,623</b>	<b>3,711,233</b>

### *Expenditure*

The comparative figures shown below have been classified under main heads.

	1947	1948	1949
	\$	\$	\$
Administration .....	1,281,360	1,457,446	1,343,024
Social Services (Education, Health, Prisons,) .....	476,028	568,199	610,677
Subventions (including price stabilization) .....	35,322	36,941	25,241
Public Debt .....	163,579	157,911	83,861
Public Works Improvements .....	153,765	219,305	275,428
Self-balancing Expenditure (Posts, Telegraphs, Telephones and Electric Power) .....	244,206	252,980	245,431
Repayment of 1931 Hurricane Loan .....	—	—	428,743
Expenditure on Colonial Development & Welfare Schemes .....	433,401	529,074	647,194
Production (Agriculture & Forestry) .....	122,324	173,060	187,775
	<b>2,909,985</b>	<b>3,394,916</b>	<b>3,847,374</b>

Administration includes expenditure on Justice, Police, Pensions, Defence, Public Works and some minor branches of Government work.

### Public Debt

The outstanding debt of the Colony at the 31st December, 1949, amounted to \$1,160,503, of which sum \$107,725 was in respect of borrowings made locally. Sinking funds in hand amounted to \$359,397, thus giving a figure of \$801,106 as the net outstanding debt. The average interest being paid on the loans outstanding is 4.5 per centum per annum.

During 1949 the Public Debt of the Colony was reduced considerably by the repayment of the 1931 Hurricane Reconstruction Loan. This loan was repaid by means of a grant obtained from His Majesty's Government. A loan of \$20,975 was raised locally for the Centralization of Telecommunications at Stanley Field.

### 3. Assets and Liabilities

The statement of the Assets and Liabilities of the Colony as at 31st December, 1949, shows assets divisible as follows:

	\$
Cash .....	54,084
Investments of Various Funds .....	1,740,540
Advances to official and public organizations .....	171,539
Deficit .....	69,173
	<hr/>
	\$2,035,336

Liabilities may be classified briefly as shown below:

	\$
Unexpended balances of loans .....	8,406
Deposits—Fund balances, etc. ....	2,022,169
Drafts .....	4,761
	<hr/>
	\$2,035,336

In addition the following information must be given to present a true account.

	\$
Public Debt of the Colony	1,160,503
Less accumulated Sinking Fund in hand .....	359,397
	<hr/>
	801,106
Loan Investments .....	511,300
	<hr/>

The sum of \$119,725 was also due to the Colony on account of expenditure on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes.

### 4. Description of the Main Heads of Taxation

The main heads and their yield in revenue are set out below:

	1947	1948	1949
	\$	\$	\$
<i>Customs</i>			
Import Duties .....	1,042,246	890,322	838,838
Export Duties .....	117,195	109,318	72,591
Package Tax .....	53,435	25,366	—
Harbour Dues, etc. ....	14,150	15,441	14,449
Entry Tax .....	—	20,593	53,048
Administration Charges .....	—	—	1,781
<i>Internal Taxation, etc.</i>			
Excise Duties .....	186,862	203,902	207,589
Income Tax .....	346,818	414,125	430,500
Land Tax .....	39,653	39,429	42,755
Estae Duty .....	3,311	35,161	28,011
Licences, Banks & Fire Insurance Companies .....	1,443	1,523	4,312
Other Licences: Motor Vehicles, etc. ....	19,933	25,167	29,253
Fines of Court .....	17,385	13,401	9,179
Fees of Court and Stamp Duties .....	14,750	15,595	23,129
Warehouse Rents .....	37,886	32,579	18,946

*Import Duties.* The tariff of import duties is largely *ad valorem* with a general duty of 27½ per centum and a preferential rate of 15 per centum. Specific duties are levied on wines, certain defined spirits and tobacco and cigarettes. Equipment for agricultural and forestry operations may be admitted free of duty under Concessions for Development.

*Export Duties* are levied upon chicle, coconuts, mahogany, cedar, pine and fish.

*Entry Tax.* This tax came into effect on 21.7.48 imposing a 1% Tax on the C.I.F. values on all goods imported into the Colony for home consumption.

*Excise Duty* is imposed on locally produced rum at the rate of \$4.50 per proof gallon if intended for consumption within the Colony. There is also a small duty on tobacco, cigars and cigarettes.

*Land Tax.* A tax is levied on all lands at the rate of 1½ cents an acre.

*Income Tax.* Income Tax is levied on the chargeable income of any person at the rate of 5 per centum of the first \$500 increasing by a sliding scale up to 35 per centum on that part of incomes in excess of \$19,000. A surtax on a sliding scale is also levied on chargeable income in excess of \$10,000 being 10 per centum on the first \$5,000, 15 per centum on the next \$5,000 and 20 per centum on the remainder. Company Tax is at the rate of 35 cents on every dollar of chargeable income of a Company.

*Licences, Banks and Fire Insurance Companies.* Any establishment carrying on the business of banking pays an annual licence fee of \$500, and Fire

Insurance Companies pay a licence fee at the rate of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per centum on gross premiums with a minimum fee of 25 dollars.

*Estate Duty.* Duty is chargeable on estates over \$100 based on a scale which is \$1.00 per centum on estates up to \$500 increasing to \$25.00 per centum on estates over \$50,000.

*Licences—Motor Vehicles.* An annual duty is payable on all motor vehicles varying according to the weight of the vehicle, its classification, and the purpose it serves.

*Stamp Duties.* The chief features are impositions of 3 cents on cheques, receipts and bills of exchange with 10 cents for every \$100 on promissory notes. On transfers of property and mortgages the rates are 25 and 10 cents respectively for every \$50.00 or part thereof.

*Warehouse Rents.* A charge is made on merchandise which is deposited in bond, usually for re-export.

### 5. Customs Tariff

Broadly, the Customs Schedule of Duties may be described as a two-part *ad valorem* tariff on C.I.F. prices with specific duties on a few selected articles. Under the general tariff, the majority of the small and general importations subject to *ad valorem* duties bear a  $27\frac{1}{2}$  per cent imposition; under the preferential tariff the duty is one of 15 per cent.

Equipment, such as trucks, tractors, carts, wagons and agricultural implements, imported to aid in agriculture or in forestry operations, is admitted free.

Specific duties, with some qualifications, are levied on importations of cattle, on certain manufactured articles such as bicycles, boots and shoes, fuel oils and petroleum, on the chief items of food and on wines, spirits and tobacco.

Some imports, the principal of which are cutlery, plated goods and jams, etc., bear a thirty per cent levy on the General Tariff and fifteen per cent on the Preferential.

### 6. Excise

Excise Duties are confined to rum and tobacco, the rate on the former being \$4.50 per gallon if not exceeding the strength of proof and \$4.50 per proof gallon. The rates on tobacco, are now:

- |     |   |                   |                  |
|-----|---|-------------------|------------------|
| (a) | cigars, weighing not more than 5 lb.    | per 1,000         | 20 cents per 100 |
|     | weighing over 5 lb.                     | per 1,000 .. .. . | 50 cents per 100 |
| (b) | cigarettes weighing not more than 3 lb. | per 1,000 .. .. . | 15 cents per 100 |
|     | weighing over 3 lb.                     | per 1,000 .. .. . | 30 cents per 100 |
| (c) | manufactured .. .. .                    | .. .. .           | 60 cents per lb. |

## 7. Income Tax

Income Tax on individuals is payable at the following rates:

		\$			
On the first	500	of Chargeable Income			5%
„ next	500	„	„		6%
„ „	500	„	„		8%
„ „	500	„	„		10%
„ „	500	„	„		12½%
„ „	500	„	„		15%
„ „	500	„	„		17½%
„ „	1,000	„	„		20%
„ „	4,500	„	„		25%
„ „	10,000	„	„		30%
On all amounts above \$19,000			„		35%

The rates of Surtax on Individuals are:

On the first \$5,000 in excess of \$10,000 of Chargeable Income 10%

On the next \$5,000 .. .. . 15%

On the remainder .. .. . 20%

The tax on Companies is 35%.

*Incidence of Income Tax*

## Tax Payable

Gross Income	Single Person	Married Man	Married man with one child	Married Man with two children
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1,000	20.00	5.00	—	—
1,500	46.00	28.00	17.50	7.50
2,000	79.00	55.00	43.00	31.00
3,000	170.00	135.00	115.00	95.00
4,000	300.00	252.50	222.50	195.00
5,000	470.00	410.00	370.00	335.00
6,000	695.00	620.00	570.00	530.00
7,000	945.00	870.00	820.00	770.00
8,000	1,195.00	1,120.00	1,070.00	1,020.00
9,000	1,445.00	1,370.00	1,320.00	1,270.00
10,000	1,695.00	1,620.00	1,570.50	1,520.00
15,000	3,595.00	3,475.00	3,395.00	3,315.00
20,000	5,795.00	5,660.00	5,570.00	5,480.00
35,000	13,995.00	13,850.00	13,720.00	13,610.00



**Deductions allowed against gross income are:**

Personal allowance	..	..	..	\$500
Wife	..	..	..	\$300
Each child	..	..	..	\$200
Dependent relative				\$125
Earned Income 1/10 of gross income up to ..				\$500
Life Insurance Premiums up to a certain limit				
Gifts to charity.				

**8. Estate Duty**

Under the provisions of an Ordinance in 1927, as amended in 1949, Estate Duty is payable according to a general scale as follows:

<i>When the amount on which duty is chargeable</i>				<i>Estate duty shall be payable at the rate per centum of—</i>
Exceeds	\$100 but does not exceed		\$500	\$1.00
„	500	„	2,000	1.50
„	2,000	„	4,000	2.00
„	4,000	„	6,000	3.00
„	6,000	„	10,000	3.50
„	10,000	„	15,000	5.00
„	15,000	„	20,000	7.50
„	20,000	„	25,000	10.00
„	25,000	„	30,000	12.50
„	30,000	„	35,000	15.00
„	35,000	„	40,000	17.50
„	40,000	„	45,000	20.00
„	45,000	„	50,000	22.50
„	50,000			25.00

**Chapter IV: Currency and Banking****CURRENCY***Standard and Legal Tender*

The standard of currency is the British Honduras dollar which was of the equivalent value of the dollar of the United States of America until the exchange rate was changed to \$4.00 to the £ on 31st December, 1949. Currency notes in denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, and \$10 issued by the Currency Commissioners are legal tender up to any amount. Subsidiary silver currency is legal tender in payment of any amount not exceeding ten dollars but coins of bronze nickel or mixed metal in five cent or one cent pieces are legal tender up to fifty cents only.

*Circulation*

The note circulation of the Colony, which stood at \$283,536 at the 31st December, 1939, expanded to \$837,643 at the end of 1949. The figures for each denomination were as follows:

	<i>Number of Notes</i>	<i>Amount \$</i>
\$1	100,509	100,509
\$2	45,697	91,394
\$5	83,186	415,930
\$10	22,981	229,810
		<hr/> \$837,643

This figure represented an increase of \$5,312 over the quantity in circulation a year before. The reserve of notes, at the commencement of the year was \$1,074,000. The issues during the year amounted to \$194,000 leaving a balance on hand at 31st December of \$880,000.

### *Subsidiary Currency*

The Coin issue of the Colonial Government at the 31st December was as follows:

<i>Silver</i>		<i>\$</i>
50 cent pieces.. ..	69,952	
25 " " .. ..	49,389	
10 " " .. ..	25,739	
5 " " .. ..	5,546	
<i>Mixed metal (nickel, bronze, etc)</i>		
5 cent pieces.. ..	22,003	
1 " " (bronze)	13,354	
	<hr/>	\$185,983

### BANKING

Banking in the Colony is conducted by two Banks, the Royal Bank of Canada which was established in 1912 when the Bank of British Honduras was purchased, and the Barclays Bank (D. C. & O.) which opened a Branch in the Colony on 4th September, 1949. These Banks provide all the usual banking services.

The Government Savings Bank, operating from the Treasury in Belize, with a branch in the administrative centre of each district, increased its deposits from \$410,632 at the 1st January, 1939, to \$1,608,314.70 at the end of 1949. The deposits during 1949, increased by \$31,531.01 as compared with the figures of the previous year. Account holders numbered 7,532 with an average holding of \$213.

## Chapter V: Commerce

### EXPORTS

The Colony's chief exports are mahogany and cedar logs, mahogany, cedar and pine lumber, bananas and citrus fruits and re-exports of manufactured articles.

The exports for the years 1948 and 1949 were as follows:—

	1948	1949
Domestic Exports .. .. .	\$4,243,522	\$3,372,602
Re-Exports .. .. .	1,899,079	1,192,245
<b>Total Exports .. .. .</b>	<b>\$6,142,601</b>	<b>\$4,564,847</b>

Grapefruit Juice to the value of \$288,872 was exported during 1949 as compared with \$429,473 in 1948. The domestic exports of Chicle Gums were \$509,683, as against 1948 figures which were \$1,444,655. There has been a gradual annual increase of the exports of Pine and Mahogany lumber. The exports of Pine lumber amounted to \$593,985 as against \$418,553 in 1948. Mahogany lumber exported realized \$1,148,790 in 1949 and \$1,203,898 in 1948. The exports of Mahogany logs, which went principally to the United States of America, amounted to \$128,674 in 1949 as against \$1,438,623 in 1948. Coconuts exported in 1949 amounted to \$82,618 as against the exports in 1948 of \$154,429.

#### IMPORTS

Imports showed a decrease of \$2,049,301 compared with the previous year's figure of \$7,669,906; this is due to import restrictions and to the fact that transshipment cargo is no longer included in the imports and exports figures for 1949. The imports of rice during the current year amounted to 15,713 cwt. costing \$162,649. 42,167 bags of flour (96 lb. each) cost \$421,870 in 1949, while 36,743 bags cost \$495,251 in 1948. The imports of motor cars, trucks and jeeps were 77 units to the value of \$123,948, while the previous year's imports were 86 units costing \$116,953. The imports of Cotton Piece Goods showed a decrease of \$253,307 compared to 1948 imports of \$577,243.

## Chapter VI: Production

#### AGRICULTURE

The staff of the Department of Agriculture consisted of a Director of Agriculture, a Veterinary Officer, two Assistant Agricultural Officers, two Agricultural Instructors, and nine Farm Demonstrators. In addition, thirteen temporary Farm Demonstrators were employed under a Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme aimed at encouraging increased local food production. The new post of Senior Agricultural Officer was approved and an officer appointed towards the end of the year.

#### *Crop Production.*

The year 1949 produced one of the most severe droughts experienced in the history of the Colony and the drier Northern and Western districts were hard hit by the dry conditions; the failure of food crops and losses of live-stock were responsible for great hardship in the Districts and much relief work was necessary, with meagre food supplies having to be augmented from other Districts. The Southern Districts of the Colony were not so hard

hit and conditions were reasonably satisfactory. Areas under all food crops were considerably reduced and yields were low.

*Livestock.*

Apart from deaths of livestock as a result of drought conditions there were no major outbreaks of diseases and stock generally kept good health. Some use was made of the stud animals provided by the Department.

Approximate figures for the various types of livestock were:

Cattle .....	10,000
Pigs .....	10,000
Horsekind .....	3,000
Sheep and Goats .....	500
Poultry .....	40,000

ORGANISATION AND DESTINATION OF PRODUCTION

*Grain Crops.* Yields were considerably reduced though at the beginning of the year there was promise of an increased area to be planted; drought conditions, however, cancelled all hopes of any reasonable crop and it was necessary to rush additional supplies to the normal grain growing districts. Luckily there was a carry over from the favourable season of 1948 and adequate supplies were available even after 2,061,300 lb. valued at \$95,494 had been exported.

Rice production in the South was satisfactory; this crop is steadily increasing in the Colony.

*Beans.* Production was severely limited by the drought and it was not until the end of the year that good stands were obtained for reaping in 1950.

*Bananas.* Though production was considerably lower than in 1948, the acreage under this crop is increasing, preparations being made for large plantings in the Western districts in addition to the established and newly planted areas in the Southern districts; leafspot disease was kept under reasonable control by spraying. Exports of bananas totalled 58,056 stems, valued at \$38,269.

*Coconuts.* The industry suffered considerably from the dry conditions and yields were severely curtailed. Exports amounted to 1,807,004 nuts valued at \$82,618. Local oil manufacture also used a good proportion of the crop.

*Citrus.* Exports were as follows:—

Grapefruit	61,794 cwt. valued at	\$230,870
Oranges	1,771 cwt. valued at	\$4,370
Grapefruit Juice	3,313,912 lb. valued at	\$228,872
Orange juice	58,243 lb. valued at	\$4,438.

giving a total export value for the industry of \$468,520. The crop was somewhat affected by the dry conditions, but expansion of the industry has continued.

**Sugar Cane.** Production remains in the hands of small and medium growers; the crop was a reasonable one and reflected the increased acreage planted in 1948. 352 tons of unrefined sugar valued at \$39,413 were exported.

**Other Crops.** The purchase of *cohune* kernels was undertaken as a relief measure and resulted in export of 545,921 lb. valued at \$35,807.

Other exports included *plantains* to the value of \$2,834 and a trial shipment of *tobacco* valued at \$1,500.

**Marketing.** The Marketing Board functioned throughout the year and encouraged growers of local foodstuffs by offering guaranteed prices for certain crops and also making loans to enable farmers to clean and cultivate their land.

#### FISHERIES

There is no Fisheries Department. Fishing in the Colony engages about 125 fishing dories and smacks of a length varying from fifteen to thirty-five feet and averaging from half a ton to ten tons each, with an aggregate of 150 tons.

Legislation governing fishing generally in the waters of the Colony is still under consideration by Government. On the 24th September, 1948, an export duty on fish came into effect. The rates are as follows:—

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (a) Crawfish (commonly known as Crayfish,                  |  |
| Rock Lobster and Shell Fish)                               | 1½ cents a pound on gross tail weight. |
| (b) Whole Crawfish   | ½ cent a pound.                        |
| (c) On other fish, whether fresh, salted or smoked .. .. . | 1 cent a pound.                        |

#### FORESTRY

The principal forest products are:

- (a) Mahogany logs and lumber
- (b) Cedar logs and lumber
- (c) Pine lumber
- (d) Secondary hardwood logs and lumber
- (e) Rosewood sold by the ton
- (f) Chicle and Crown gum
- (g) Cohune kernels
- (h) Firewood and charcoal
- (i) Alligator skins

The total area of forest lands in the Colony is 8,337 square miles or 93.9 per cent of the total area. It consists of the following types:

- |                            |               |      |
|----------------------------|---------------|------|
| I Mangrove forests .. .. . | approximately | 2.8% |
| II Savannahs               |               |      |
| (a) Brackish water)        | Wet Savannahs | 2.7% |
| (b) Fresh water )          | „             |      |
| (c) Inland                 | Pine forest   |      |

III	Pine forest	Dry Savannahs	„	15.4 %
IV	High rain forest			
	1. Swamp forest .. ..	„	2.3 %	
	2. Intermediate forest .. ..	„	17.9 %	
	3. Mountain forest)			
	4. Advanced forest)			
	) Advanced forest	„	51.9 %	
V	Secondary rain forest)			
	(i) High forest )			
	(ii) Existing and recently abandoned			
	cultivation .. ..	„	7.0 %	
	Total land area of mainland			100.0 %

There was a general weakening in the timber market during the early months of 1949. Mahogany firms endeavoured to keep down their purchases to a minimum and the shortage of pine lumber on the local market, due to good export prices in 1948, changed to an abundance.

Had the demand been strong pine production records would have been broken because it has been one of the driest and therefore most favourable logging seasons ever experienced. Up till the end of December there were no floods on the rivers. This was a disadvantage to mahogany operators who had logs to be floated out.

Towards the end of the year the devaluation of the pound sterling caused most sawmills to close down.

The extremely dry season and the the fires which devastated 250 square miles of hardwood chicle forest made 1949 the worst chicle year for a generation. There was renewed interest in chicle towards the end of the year both in the U.S.A. and Europe. This can be traced to exchange difficulties and the restrictions imposed by Mexico.

Many serious fires destroyed extensive areas of pine seedlings one to four years old. Those over eight feet high usually survived the grass fires in a very scorched condition.

Plantations suffered from the drought. Much of the mahogany seed sown did not germinate and thirty per cent of the pine plants put out on 134 acres died from drought. The older compartments in the pine and mahogany plantations did not suffer and the results are so good at Stann Creek that plans have been made and incorporated in the Ten Year Overall Plan for the Colony, which allow for the formation of 500 acres of pine plantations each year from 1951-1960.

Two shipments of Balsa, which is mature in seven years, were made to the United Kingdom and the prospects of increased trade in this and other "hardwoods" have improved. A sample shipment of turpentine and resin

was sent for test. It is hoped that a naval stores industry will develop in the slash pine forests.

## Chapter VII: Social Services

### EDUCATION

The system of primary education is that of subsidized denominational schools and is controlled by a Board of Education appointed under the Education Ordinance, 1926 (No. 14 of 1926). The Governor is President of the Board, while the Director of Education acts as Secretary. A representative of the teachers is included among its members.

There are 85 grant-aided and three Government primary schools. There are also some 27 unaided primary schools both denominational and private. All primary schools are co-educational, with the exception of four in Belize. The ages of enrolment for the purpose of grants-in-aid are five to fifteen inclusive.

Secondary education is entirely in the hands of the denominations, but the Government assists by providing sixty-five scholarships for pupils from primary schools, each scholarship being tenable for four years, though it may be extended for a fifth year with the approval of the Board of Education. There are five secondary schools, three of which are for boys. Three have preparatory departments. Teachers are largely recruited from abroad. The age-range of pupils receiving secondary education proper is eleven to eighteen. The schools are all situated in Belize.

There is no vocational school, but the building for one was put up during the year and teaching will start as soon as staff and equipment are available. Handicrafts are taught at two schools in Belize, and instruction in domestic science is given to a limited number of girls from the higher standards at one centre in Belize. The teaching of agriculture is encouraged in rural schools by free grants of tools. The industrial school for male juvenile delinquents, which is conducted by the Salvation Army on behalf of the Government, began operating again, towards the end of 1949, in new quarters at Baking Pot near Cayo.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen. That the enforcement of compulsion has been a success may be inferred from the fact that the percentage of the average attendance to the enrolment in the Colony is approximately eighty, the highest in the British Caribbean area. Education is theoretically not yet free however, each primary school pupil being expected to pay a fee of 5 cents (3d.) weekly; few in fact do so.

An average of 230 certified teachers and ninety-seven pupil teachers is employed in the primary schools. The majority of the teachers are untrained, but since 1941 selected teachers have been sent to training colleges in Jamaica, there being twelve such teachers training annually. Twenty-six have thus far completed their training and have been posted to schools. The Education Department staff includes three supervisors whose primary duty is to help to raise the standard of teaching in the schools.



NURSERY PLANTING AT A CITRUS ESTATE



CLEARING A WAY THROUGH THE JUNGLE FOR THE NEW  
AUGUST PINE RIDGE—ORANGE WALK FEEDER ROAD





VILLAGE FIRE FIGHTERS AT BENQUE VIEJO

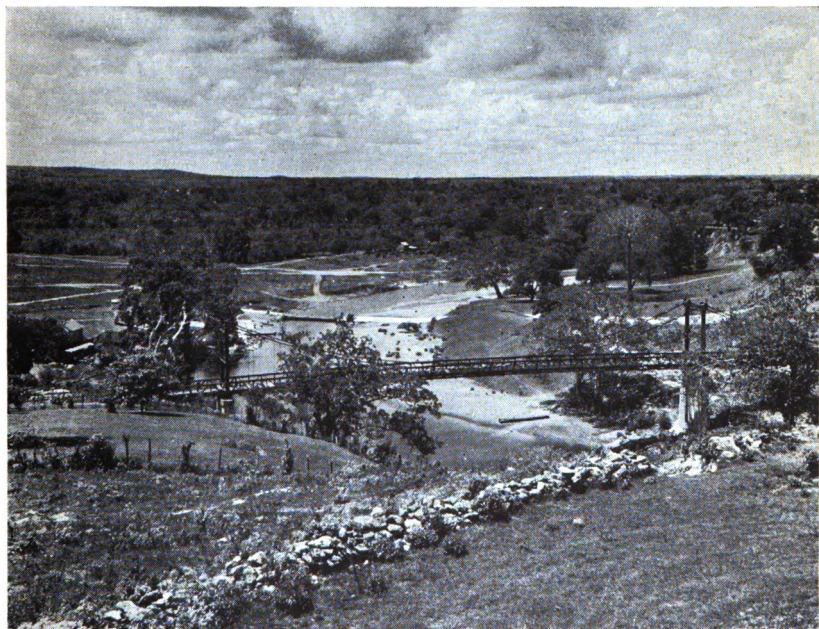


THE ALCALDE'S COURT AT SAN PEDRO COLUMBIA

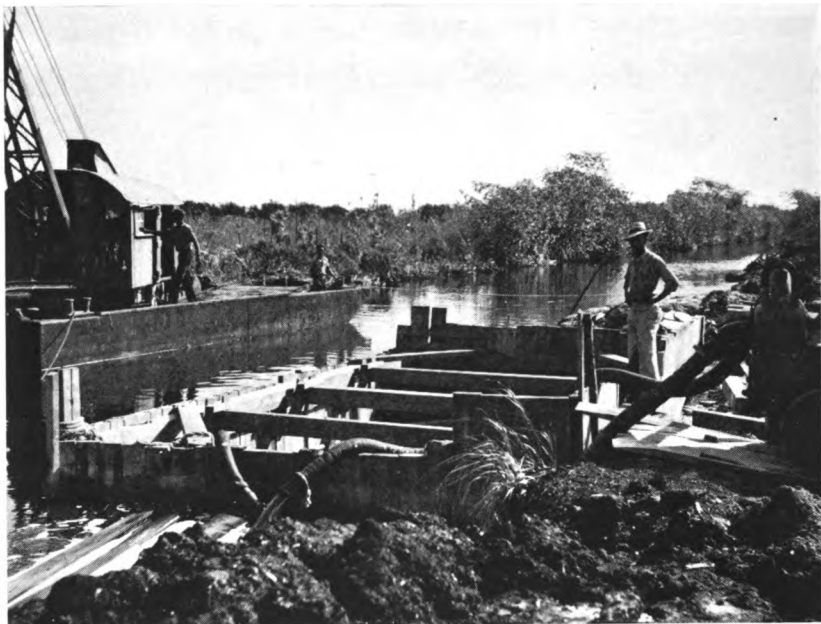
*The Alcalde is the headman of an Indian village. His insignia of office is a Barra—a silver knobbed stick—which he is seen holding*



A MARKET ON THE SOUTH BANK OF THE BELIZE RIVER



NEW BRIDGE AT EL CAYO



**BRIDGE BUILDING OPERATIONS ON THE NEW HECTOR CREEK ROAD**



**CLEARING GROUND FOR CITRUS GROWING**

The position of the teachers has been improved by the approval in 1946 of the granting of assistance towards housing. New and much improved salary scales are now paid, and the quantity and quality of recruits has improved considerably. The British Honduras Teachers' Federation, which was organized in 1939 with constituent associations in all the districts, holds an annual conference and makes recommendations to the Board of Education from time to time.

After a Vacation Conference and several meetings of teachers in Indian Schools a new curriculum was drawn up in 1949 and is now being put into operation.

The British Council supplies periodicals to certain schools, primary and secondary. It has also given books to the Jubilee Library, Belize, to form the nucleus of a teachers' Reference Library, and adds books regularly to the general stock.

Education has benefited from Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes under which grants have been approved for the free supply of text-books, stationery and equipment to schools, towards the rehabilitation of some twenty-eight school buildings damaged or destroyed by hurricane in 1942 towards the holding of annual teachers' vacation courses during the past four years, and for the establishment of a Technical High School in Belize.

The Credit Union Movement continues to grow in strength.

The average enrolment of grant-aided primary schools was 11,298 in 1949 and the average attendance 9,227. The average enrolment in the secondary schools (excluding preparatory departments) was 536, and there was an estimated enrolment of 1,215 and average attendance of 900 in non-grant-aided primary schools and preparatory departments of the secondary schools.

For 1949 the total expenditure from the revenue of the Colony was \$247,851.

#### HEALTH

The vital statistics for the year are as follows:—

Estimated population .. .. .	65,354
Number of births .. .. .	2,548
Birth rate per 1,000 of population .. .. .	38.9
Number of deaths from all causes .. .. .	877
Death Rate per 1,000 of population .. .. .	13.41
Number of deaths in infants under 1 year of age .. .. .	266
Infant mortality rate per 100 live births .. .. .	104.8

#### Malaria

This disease still continues to hold first place in the causes of morbidity. 898 cases were treated in the various hospitals throughout the Colony, representing 14.25% of the total hospital admissions. The comparative figure for 1948 was 16%.

2,048 houses, including those in the Indian villages of San Pedro Columbia and San Antonio, were sprayed with a 5% solution of D.D.T. in kerosene, whilst Paludrine was distributed to children in selected schools as a prophylactic measure against Malaria.

### *Typhoid Fever*

Sixty sporadic cases were reported with a case fatality rate of 8.3% as compared with 44 cases with a case fatality rate of 9% in 1948.

### *Tuberculosis*

Forty-five cases with 33 deaths were reported as compared with 35 cases with 45 deaths in 1948.

### *Venereal Diseases*

There were 5,388 attendances at the Venereal Diseases Clinic of the Belize Hospital as compared with 6,081 in 1948. 3,231 bloods were examined by the Kahn reaction for syphilis; 690 or 21.3 were positive, as compared with 3,150 bloods with 784 or 24.88% positive, in 1948.

### *Medical Staff*

The establishment consists of a Senior Medical Officer, eight Medical Officers, a Matron and a Nursing Sister. Other Hospital staff consists of a Head Dispenser with two qualified assistants, and three apprentices and two laboratory technicians. The nursing staff consists of thirteen staff nurses, and sixty-four nurses including nurses in training. The Health Staff includes eleven sanitary inspectors and one probationer sanitary inspector, an Inspector of Midwives, eight rural nurses and three District Nurses.

### *Hospitals*

There are six hospitals in the Colony, one for each district, with a total of 187 beds, twenty-five of which are in the maternity wards. The fees range from twenty-five cents a day for fourth-class patients to \$3.00 a day for the first-class, but no charge is made for the poor and indigent. Admissions to the Belize Hospital during 1949 numbered 3,398, and to District Hospitals 2,903 as compared with 3,640 and 2,375 respectively in 1948. The Out-patients Department of Belize Hospital recorded 33,740 attendances including those who attended as ambulatory cases of illness, and also the various clinics including the Dental Clinic, casualty dressing and minor operations, as against 35,383 in 1948.

### *Sanitary Organization*

Sanitary Inspectors are in charge of the scavenging of the City; they are responsible for the inspection of all receptacles for the collection of water and for the rigid enforcement of the by-laws governing bakeries, restaurants, hotels and slaughter houses.

The sea and the canals which run through the town of Belize provide the only means for a majority of the householders to dispose of their night



soil. Disagreeable and unsightly as it may seem, there can be little doubt that it is the best expedient which could be adopted. Methods of disposal of night soil in the country villages are faulty.

### *Rural Dispensaries*

Three large dispensaries, to two of which nurses' quarters have been added, have been constructed under scheme D 1020 Colonial Development and Welfare at a total cost of \$28,129.

### HOUSING

In Belize, the population live in houses constructed of timber with galvanized iron roofs, standing usually on wooden piles about seven feet above the level of the ground, which is often swampy and flooded. The work of filling in plots with pipeshank from the sea bed is constantly being undertaken by private individuals and the City Council, while reclamation schemes have, from time to time, been undertaken by the Government. It is not usual to find any ground-floor rooms used for sleeping; their use is normally confined to storage, washing, or for kitchen purposes. Only a small number of the population live in houses which they own.

Housing conditions elsewhere in the Colony are poor. The principal building medium is locally grown pine with imported galvanized corrugated iron for roof covering. The Indians build of native round wood for framing with palmetto pole and mud walls with a thatched roof of local palm leaves.

In all towns and villages there is a definite shortage of housing accommodation, the shortage being most acute in the capital, Belize. There are at present in existence in Belize 7 Government owned houses which accommodate 7 families of the poorer type working class.

A Housing scheme for Belize has been prepared consisting of thirty-three individual houses to be erected and twenty-two lots to be leased for building houses with the assistance of the Local Authority. The scheme has been approved.

### SOCIAL WELFARE

During the year 1949, the staff of the Social Welfare Department consisted of:—

The Co-operative and Social Welfare Officer  
The Assistant Welfare Officer  
The Handicraft Instructor.

The Co-operative and Social Welfare Officer, was absent from the Colony from the 25th May, to the 23rd September, 1949. The Assistant Welfare Officer acted in his absence. On the 1st November, 1949, the former was seconded for duty with the Colonial Development Corporation.

Work in the rural areas continued entirely through the efforts of voluntary helpers, mainly teachers and rural health nurses. Village councils continue to play their part and many communal amenities have been provided as a results of efforts organised by them.

The Credit Union movement is now well established in the Colony and at the end of the year there were sixteen registered Unions. Of these six are in the town of Belize and the remainder in the districts. Membership is increasing, the habit of thrift hitherto absent is growing and capital is being built up and utilized by the members to better their economic conditions.

Handicraft continues at the Government institutions, namely at the Poor House which specializes in the making of door mats from coconut coir. Matresses are also made by the inmates of the mental Hospital. A payment scheme exists for the inmates and surplus profits are used for the provision of amenities for the institution. During the year the following amenities were provided from this fund, one Loud speaker extension for the female Poor House, and ten bedside lockers, also two wheeled chairs have been ordered.

The Handicraft Centre under the direction of the Instructor and his assistant continues to progress. There are now nine girls and three boys engaged on a piece work basis. It is hoped ultimately to run this centre on a co-operative basis when the business will be owned by the workers themselves. The Centre which has a Savings Union and Study club continue to give their fortnightly programme of entertainment to the inmates of the Poor House and at Christmas provided an Xmas pageant which was also presented at His Majesty's Prison.

Public Assistance is administered through the Outdoor Relief Committee of which the Social Welfare Officer is the Chairman. The number of persons on relief at the end of the year was just under 900 persons, and the expenditure for the period \$30,221.41. During the year the report of the select Committee appointed to consider and make recommendations on the whole question of relief was received. A general increase in the rate was recommended to \$1.00 per week. The rolls were revised and many persons whose circumstances had improved were removed from the rolls.

The Gann Rest House, a night shelter for homeless men operated by the Salvation Army, continues to justify its existence. During the year 9,478 men were accommodated, a considerable increase over 8,634 for 1948, the average being 789 per month. There is a nightly attendance of 26 regular lodgers at the shelter and about 12 irregular ones. Accommodation for the night is free and bread and butter and tea is served in the morning at two cents per individual. If the person is unable to pay this service is given free. During the year this meal was supplied to 9,350 men. The upkeep of the institution was met by a grant of \$720 from the Central Government, \$308.50 from the Public Assistance Board and \$219.48 being fees received from lodgers.

Wide use had to be made of the Probation System during the year as there was no approved school for delinquents for the greater part of the year. At the beginning of the year there were 31 persons on Probation. Of these 20 cases were satisfactorily concluded. The number of visits to homes by the Probation Officer during the year totalled 51 and visits to the Court 174.

It must however be borne in mind that the services of this Officer are only part time. With the opening of Listowel Training School for Boys at Baking Pot on the 3rd December, 1949 many of the cases referred to the Probation Officer will now be committed to this institution.

## Chapter VIII: Legislation

### *Local Loans Ordinance, 1949.*

This Ordinance defines the terms and conditions applicable to Local Loans authorised to be raised by the Legislature of the Colony.

### *Radio-Active Minerals, 1949.*

Ordinance No. 3 of 1949 makes provision to regulate and control prospecting and mining for radio-active minerals in the Colony and the exportation of such minerals.

### *Customs and Excise Duties, 1949.*

This Ordinance consolidates the Customs and Excise duties legislation to date.

### *Estate Duty (Amendment) Ordinance, 1949.*

This Ordinance increases the rates of estate duty where the amount on which such duty is chargeable exceeds ten thousand dollars.

### *The Goods in Transit (Exemption from Duty) Ordinance, 1949.*

In keeping with a policy of Freedom of Transit this Ordinance exempts goods in transit from payment of Customs duties and other similar charges.

### *The Undesirable Immigrants (Amendment) Ordinance, 1949.*

This Ordinance increased from four hundred to one thousand dollars the maximum amount which may be demanded as a deposit from a person seeking admission into the Colony.

### *The Status of Aliens Ordinance, 1949.*

An alien has the right to acquire, hold and dispose of real and personal property of every description in the same manner in all respects as a natural-born British subject. A title to real and personal property of every description may be derived through from or in succession to an alien in the same manner as a natural-born British subject.

### *The Marketing Board and Belize Housing Scheme Loan Ordinance, 1949.*

This Ordinance authorised the raising of a loan for the purpose of purchasing machinery and equipment for, and of financing the operations of the Marketing Board and for financing a housing scheme in the town of Belize.

### *The Belize Property Site Tax Ordinance, 1949.*

This Ordinance was passed to enable the Belize City Council to levy a site tax on properties in the town of Belize.



*The British Honduras Currency Notes (Amendment) Ordinance, 1949*

This Ordinance revalued the British Honduras dollar on the basis of \$4.00 to the pound sterling and since then the British Honduras dollar has become linked to the pound sterling.

## Chapter IX: Justice, Police and Prisons

### JUSTICE

The English Common Law and all statutes of the Imperial Parliament 'in abrogation or derogation, or in any way declaratory of the Common Law' passed before 1899 extend to the Colony as far as local circumstances render such extension suitable and subject to modification by Colonial Ordinances.

Petty civil courts (termed 'District Courts') are established in each of the five magisterial districts. Each court is presided over by a Magistrate or District Commissioner who is *ex-officio* judge of the Court.

The jurisdiction is limited to claims not exceeding \$100. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court from any judgment or order of the District Court.

When dealing with cases which can be tried summarily, a Magistrate, District Commissioner or Justice of the Peace exercises jurisdiction under the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinances, and, subject to these Ordinances, has also the powers, privileges, rights and jurisdiction conferred on Justices of the Peace by the Common Law of England. Appeals from the jurisdiction of Magistrates and District Commissioners lie to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of British Honduras is governed by Chapter 153 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, and is presided over by the Chief Justice. The jurisdiction is the same as that of a High Court of Justice in England. Appeal lies from this Court to the Privy Council. The Court holds quarterly sessions at Belize during January, April, July, and October, and at Corozal similar sessions during March, June, September and December.

The number of civil suits issued in the District Court (Civil Jurisdiction) was 520 and, in addition, there were 12 claims for compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1942. A total of \$2,742.90 was awarded to the dependants of the deceased workmen in 4 of the claims, and a total sum of \$2,574.69 was awarded in the remaining 8 claims for partial incapacity.

The total number of criminal and quasi-criminal cases dealt with in the Summary Courts was 1,921 in Belize and 852 in the out-districts, classified as follows:

	<i>Belize</i>	<i>Districts</i>
Homicide .. .. .	3	2
Offences against the person .. ..	119	86
Offences against property .. ..	327	65
Malicious injury to Property .. ..	—	1

Praedial larceny .. .. .	4	5
Other crimes .. .. .	20	27
Offences under Labour Laws .. ..	3	4
Offences against Laws relating to Revenue, Municipal Road and Social Economy ..	371	257
Petty offences .. .. .	957	405
	<hr/> 1,804	<hr/> 852

## POLICE.

*Composition & Distribution.*

In 1949 the British Honduras Police Force consisted of 1 Superintendent 2 Assistant Superintendents and 190 other ranks. The majority of the force are British Hondurans with a few West Indians making up the remainder. The officers are members of the Unified Colonial Police Service. Force Headquarters is in Belize, the capital, and 117 all ranks are employed in Belize as follows:—Superintendent's Office 7; Immigration Branch 8; Detective Branch 16; Criminal Records Office 4; Court Sergeant's Branch 6; Traffic Branch 9; Mounted Branch 6; Trades and Special Duties 7; and Uniform Branch 54. The remaining 76 members of the force man the district Head Stations and sub-stations as follows:—Corozal 13; Orange Walk 9; El Cayo 8; Stann Creek 9; Punta Gorda 8; Benque Viejo 8; Roaring Creek 1; Douglas 1; Progreso 1; Patchakan 1; Gallon Jug 2; August Pine Ridge 1; San Antonio N.D. 1; San Estevan 1; San Roman 1; Gales Point 1; Maskall 1; Crooked Tree 1; San Pedro 1; Caye Caulker 1; Mullins River 1; Sittee River 1; Seine Bight 1; Monkey River 1; Barranco 1; and San Antonio T.D. 1. The older police Stations are gradually being replaced by new buildings and during the year the following new accommodation was taken over:—In Belize the Roosevelt Annex was completed and this now contains Sleeping Quarters, the Superintendent's Office and General Office, the Registered Office of the Police Credit Union Ltd., the offices of the Assistant Superintendents of Police, the Immigration Office, the Criminal Record Office and the Detective Branch. New substations were completed and occupied at Crooked Tree and Roaring Creek and the new Civil Administrative Block, which includes the Police Station, started at El Cayo.

*Training.*

During the intervals between the Criminal Sessions of the Supreme Court, lectures and parades are taken by the officers and senior N.C.O.s. These serve to keep the force up to standard in arms drill and also serve to keep the men abreast of the latest laws, etc. The same procedure as outlined above is carried out by the N.C.O. i/c the District Head Stations. There is no regular established training depot, and the lack of such a depot is keenly felt, especially where recruits are concerned, as the training they now receive is not as thorough as that which could be given at a training depot.

*Transport.*

Transport is distributed as follows :—

Belize—1 Station Waggon, 1 Prisoner's Van, 2 Motorcycles, 2 Launches.  
El Cayo—1 car  
Corozal—1 Land Rover  
Stann Creek—1 motorcycle  
Punta Gorda—1 motorcycle  
Orange Walk—1 motorcycle.

In addition to the normal traffic duties, the Police engaged in the traffic department are responsible for the registration, testing and licensing of all the motor vehicles and bicycles in the Colony, and the keeping of all their records.

Besides the mechanical transport listed above, horses, which are invaluable in the districts, are used to a great extent for bush patrols, and for visiting various villages which have no roads leading to them suitable for motor transport.

#### PREVALENCE OF CRIME

There were 4 cases of Murder in 1949 as compared with 5 the previous year, a decrease of 1, Manslaughter also showed a decrease of 2 from the previous year's figure of 6; There was 1 Attempted Suicide and 204 cases of Criminal Harm. No Rape cases occurred during the year but 3 cases of Carnal Knowledge and 5 of Indecent Assault were recorded. Housebreaking 52 showed a sharp increase of 25. Dangerous Drugs 6, however, showed a marked decrease of 10. Juvenile Crime increased sharply and 150 cases were recorded against juveniles. Stealing (larceny) remained much about the same with 275 cases as compared with 273 cases in 1948. Traffic 421 showed an increase of 190 over the previous year's figure and Minor Offences also showed an increase of 32. A total of 2297 cases involving 2622 persons were brought before the courts by the Police. Of this figure 2291 persons or 87% were convicted, 181 were acquitted, Nolle Prosequi was entered in 12 cases and 138 cases were dealt with otherwise.

#### PRISONS

The authorized staff of the Prison Department comprises a Superintendent, a Clerk & Storekeeper, a Senior Warder, a Matron and sixteen warders and seven temporary warders.

The principal Prison is situated in Belize, it consists of 78 cells with a completely separate Female Block of 6 cells. There is a Prison Farm at Gracie Rock which was opened on 7th October, 1949, for First Offenders and Young Offenders. This Farm Prison is situated in the Pine Ridge 24 miles from Belize.

Prisoners undergoing sentences of three months or over are accommodated in Belize.

There are 5 District Prisons, one in each district, on an average they accommodate 6 prisoners. Corozal District Prison was opened up as a Temporary Place of Confinement for Juveniles on 17th January, 1949, and reverted to its original use on the completion of the "Listowel" Boys' Training School, Baking Pot, on 30th November, 1949.

The District Prisons are in charge of the civil Police subject to the District Commissioner and Superintendent of Prisons. Prisoners are only detained in the districts for sentences under 3 months. 817 persons were received during the year, an increase of 87 over the previous year.

At the main Prison in Belize, trades of Carpentry, Cabinet work, Tailoring, Mattress-making, Baking, Shoe-making, Book-binding, Concrete casting, Tortoise shell work, Wood carving, Fibrecraft and Handicraft are taught.

Short term prisoners are placed in gangs clearing Government lots and the surroundings of Government buildings. Long term recidivists are given rehabilitative training in Book-binding, Baking, Carpentry, Cabinet-making, Mattress-making, Wood carving and Sign writing. Female prisoners are employed on Prison domestic tasks such as the manufacture of coconut oil as used in the Prison for domestic purposes, fibre-beating, sewing and tapestry making, washing and mending clothes, embroidery and knitting.

A part-time Probationer Officer appointed by the Governor attends to the After-Care of prisoners.

## Chapter X: Public Utilities

Public utilities in the Colony are confined to the provision of electricity and telephones. The chief electric power station is operated by the Government in Belize but the small Town Board of Corozal provides electric lighting for its own inhabitants.

The electrical supply system in Belize is three wire direct current, 220 and 110 volts, using overhead lines on poles provided from local pine. Current is supplied by four direct-connected, diesel-driven generating sets of British manufacture, using rotary balancers for the mid-wire. Fuel oil costs twenty-eight cents and lubricating oil ninety-eight cents for each imperial gallon; the total cost of oil in 1949 was \$49,137.16.

Charges for electric current are:

(a) for lighting:

first 50 kw. per kw.	.....	15 cents
over 50 kw. per kw.	.....	12 cents
all over 100	.....	10 cents

(b) for industrial power:

15 cents to 3 cents per kw.

Consumers number over 2,227.

Ice is manufactured by the Electrical Department by a ten-ton plant of American manufacture and a five-ton plant of British make. Approximate sales of ice during 1949 were 4,816,968 lb. at a rate of half a cent per lb.

## TELEPHONES

The telephones are of the magneto type of American manufacture. Overhead cables use the poles provided for the electric wires; the airport, which is ten miles from Belize, is connected by means of a metallic circuit. In Belize there are four 150-line manual switchboards but the towns in the districts have smaller equipment. The trunk lines are copperweld single conductors using ground return. They are:

Belize—Maskall, Orange Walk, Corozal, Consejo	..	109	miles
Belize—Roaring Creek, Cayo, Benque Viejo	..	95	"
Belize—Stann Creek, Sittee, Monkey River	..	90	"
Belize—Hill Bank (Belize Estate & Produce Co. Ltd.)		45	"

There were 526 telephones connected to the Belize Exchange and 120 telephones on the trunk lines.

Charges for telephones are:

Business	desk	\$14.00	each	quarter
	wall	\$13.50	"	"
Private	desk	\$ 8.50	"	"
	wall	\$ 8.00	"	"
Out-district telephones		\$11.50	"	"

Charges are:

- (a) for inland telegrams: two cents a word with a minimum charge of thirty cents.
- (b) for trunk calls: forty cents for each five-minute period.

## Chapter XI: Communications

Up to a decade ago, almost the only means of communication in the Colony were the sea, the rivers and a number of bush trails. It is inevitable that these means will continue to play an important part in the life of the Colony; they must be used for the transportation of supplies to the settlements on the banks of the rivers, for no road scheme could contemplate linking up all the scattered communities.

### RIVERS

The Belize River, which has always been the most important for logging purposes, is navigable, almost to the frontier with Guatemala, by doreys and other light craft for the greater part of the year, but, at all times, considerable ingenuity must be exercised to negotiate the numerous 'runs'.

### THE SEA

Coastal villages in Southern Districts are served by a twice-weekly sailing from Belize of a small motor vessel, which, once a week also connects with the port of Puerto Cortes in Honduras to deliver and collect much of the surface foreign mails of the Colony. Regular services are similarly maintained to the Northern District settlements. Ships of the United Fruit Co. transport provisions and merchandise every two or three weeks from New

Orleans but the passenger service which operated before the war has not, as yet, been resumed. Small schooners provide a regular weekly service between Belize and the Florida port of Tampa. Ships from the United Kingdom have begun to call at monthly intervals, and there are fortnightly sailings between Jamaica and the Colony. The ships entering the Colony in 1949 numbered 726 with a tonnage of 167,875 compared with 810 in 1948 with a tonnage of 237,688.

Four steamship lines operated to the Colony during the year, particulars being as follows:—

<i>Line</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Frequency of Call</i>
United Fruit Co.	New Orleans, U.S.A.	Monthly
T. & J. Harrison Ltd. London	Liverpool and London	Irregular
Royal Netherlands Steamship Co.	Europe via Cristobal, Puerto Cortez and Puerto Barrios	Monthly
Cayman Island Shipping Co.	Kingston, Jamaica	Fortnightly

Of the above lines only the ships of the Cayman Island Shipping Co. take passengers. Passengers proceeding to the United States and places beyond travel by air. There is regular and frequent communication with the neighbouring Republics. No mail contract has been entered into by any of the lines.

#### ROADS

Road-making is a difficult and costly process in most areas; in coastal districts swamps are the chief obstacle; inland, dense undergrowth is a difficulty. Until roads reach the hills of the interior, where quarries can be opened, stone is not easily obtained.

Prior to 1935, there were only thirty-five miles of 'all-weather' roads in the Colony which were considered at that date to be suitable for motor traffic. Today there are 226 miles of main roads (including the recently completed Belize to Cayo road) and 51 miles of feeder roads, all suitable for motor traffic. In addition there are approximately 48 miles of cart roads, some of which can be used by motor cars during the dry season, and 154 miles of government maintained bush trails.

#### AIR SERVICES

The Airport for the Colony was constructed some ten miles north west of Belize in 1943 and 1944, and the cost was met from a Colonial Development and Welfare Grant. The airfield is officially named 'Stanley Field' to mark the association of Colonel Oliver Stanley, who as Secretary of State for the Colonies opened the Terminal Building in January, 1945.

There is a grass airfield at Corozal which is available to light aircraft only. The one at Cayo has been officially closed. A landing strip privately owned by the Belize Estate & Produce Company is located at Mango Creek near Point Placencia in the Stann Creek District. Several unscheduled flights were made to this area during the year by Transportes Aereo Centro Americano (TACA).

There are four airline companies operating scheduled services to the Colony namely:

- British West Indian Airways (BWIA)
- Transportes Aereos Centro Americanos, S.A. (In Honduras) (TACA)
- Transportes Aereos Mexicanos, S.A. (TAMSA)
- Servicio Aereo de Honduras, S.A. (SAHSA).

BWIA which formerly operated once per week to Kingston, Jamaica, have increased their service to twice a week using Lodestars and Vikings. TACA operate a thrice weekly service to San Pedro Sula, while SAHSA, an affiliate of Pan American Airways, run a bi-weekly service on the same route. These companies use Lodestars and DC-3s. TAMSA continue their twice weekly service to Chetumal and Merida whence a connecting plane to New Orleans is available.

There are no scheduled services to the United States of America. Itinerants however, stop for refuelling, and on occasions TACA have made special direct flights to New Orleans.

Aircraft movements for the year amounted to 1,036.

#### POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

There are 32 post offices in the Colony. In 1949, the number of articles dealt with was 885,596. The value of internal money and postal order business amounted to \$78,185, and to \$126,136 for external transactions.

Telephone offices, which also transact telegraph business, number 72. The local telegraph system is connected by cable across the Rio Hondo with Chetumal, by means of which telegraph business is transacted through Mexico with other countries.

There is a wireless station in Belize for the transaction daily of radio-telegraph business with stations in other countries—Stony Hill, Jamaica; Guatemala City, Mexico City, New Orleans and Miami. Transmitting and receiving equipment, which provide aeronautical telecommunications service, are also installed at the Belize Airport. Excluding messages relating to the conduct of the service, weather reports, and press messages, 11,964 radio telegrams were transmitted and 11,233 were received in 1949.

Items of news interest and forecast for the Western Caribbean are broadcast daily at 12.30 p.m. from the Belize Wireless Station, ZIK2, on a wavelength of 28.31 metres. Storm and hurricane warnings are broadcast during the hurricane season from June to November.

The charges on radiograms to Great Britain, Eire, British West Indies, Bermuda, British Guiana, Canada, Newfoundland and to all points in the United States of America are as follows:

Ordinary (Full Rate)	..	..	per word	20 cents
Code (C D E)	..	..	„	12 cents
Deferred (L C)	..	..	„	10 cents

Night Letter (N L T)	..	..	„	6½ cents	Minimum 25 words
(G L T)	..	..	„	6½ cents	Minimum 12 words
Press U.K. (Press)	..	..	„	2 cents	
U.S.A. (Press)	..	..	„	6½ cents	

## PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works other than roads completed during the year included the construction of buildings for the formation of a Prison Farm at Gracie Rock, buildings for a Boys' Training School at Baking Pot Estate, new head office and laboratory for the Department of Agriculture at Baking Pot, new District Police Stations at Crooked Tree and Roaring Creek, new quarters for the District Commissioner at Stann Creek, new quarters for Senior Official, Belize; rebuilding of office and store at Rice Station, Toledo, extra accommodation of ten rooms at the Mental Hospital and improvement and extension of the Terminal Building at the Airport.

Colonial Development and Welfare projects in hand during the year were the construction of the Belize-Hector Creek Road, the provision of a temporary water supply for Belize, construction of a new Technical School in Belize, construction of a new road and quarters for Government Officials at the Central Farm, Baking Pot. The new suspension Bridge at El Cayo was completed and opened to traffic during the year. Work on Feeder Roads in the Belize and Northern Districts was put in hand and approximately 8 miles of road completed.

## Chapter XII: Lands and Survey

### *Lands and Survey.*

The plotting of the coastal plain from the aerial survey was commenced and progress is being made.

Various types of forest were classified and areas taken off of the existing aerial survey for use in a graduated system of land tax.

Baking Pot Central Agricultural Station was surveyed in detail, roads sited and a contour map supplied to the Director of Agriculture.

A reconnaissance survey of the Roaring Creek-Middlesex Road was commenced and approximately 18½ miles of the road located. Some 52 miles of reconnaissance traverse was necessary to locate this portion of the road. The reconnaissance survey should be completed by March 1950.

Fifty lots for Ex-Servicemen were laid out in the City of Belize.

Apart from these surveys over 100 parcels of agricultural land were surveyed, having an aggregate of over 2,000 acres and entailed the demarcation of some 100 miles of boundaries by theodolite and steel tape and 30 miles of road and river traverse; over 200 concrete pillars and 150 wooden posts were placed in position to mark the surveys.



## PART III

### Chapter I: Geography and Climate

British Honduras, 5,700 miles from the United Kingdom and 600 miles west of its better-known sister colony of Jamaica, lies on the mainland of Central America facing eastwards across the Caribbean Sea. With an area of 8,598 square miles, it is approximately the same size as Wales, and nearly twice the size of Jamaica. The Colony lies between North latitudes of  $18^{\circ} 29' 5''$  and  $15^{\circ} 53' 55''$  and between West longitudes of  $89^{\circ} 9' 22''$  and  $88^{\circ} 10'$ . To the North and North-west, the frontier with Mexico is formed by the River Hondo. The frontier with the only other neighbouring republic, Guatemala, is, in the south, the River Sarstoon from the Gracias a Dios Falls to the sea, while a line drawn from these falls to Garbutt's Falls on the Belize River and thence due North to the Mexican frontier on the Hondo forms the western boundary. The greatest length of the Colony from North to South is about 174 miles with a greatest width from East to West of approximately 68 miles. The coast of British Honduras is very well sheltered from the rough seas of the Caribbean by an almost continuous line of coral reefs and 'cays' lying at distances of from ten to forty miles from the mainland. The harbour of Belize is almost surrounded by sheltering reefs—a factor which has done much to promote the growth of the port as the most important in the Colony. North of Belize, coastal waters are unusually shallow with a general depth of not more than six feet. At Commerce Bight, three miles south of the town of Stann Creek, the deepest water in the Colony is found and until the pier was destroyed by a severe storm in 1941, medium sized, ocean going, vessels were able to berth alongside. For the most part, coastal lands are low and swampy and the northern part of the Colony is flat, large areas of land rising very little above sea level.

In the area south of Belize, there is a central mountain massif of a general elevation of 2,000—3,000 feet above sea level, comprising on the east, the Maya Mountain Range, and on the west, an area of pine ridge over 120 square miles in extent. The Maya Mountains, which include the Cockscorn Spur, possessing a peak of over 3,700 feet, are by no means fully explored, and difficulties of terrain are such as to make expeditions for detailed survey very costly.

The pine ridge provides some of the best scenery in the Colony, and the large tracts of open space suggest attractions for the tourist. Remoteness from rivers and roads would render the extraction of the pine an uneconomic proposition.

Numerous rivers, not all of which are easily navigable by any kind of craft, provided until recent times almost the only means of communication with the interior: the most important, the Belize River, can be negotiated in all but the very dry months by specially constructed motor boats of shallow draught, for 120 miles upstream. No thorough survey of the soil of the Colo-

ny has yet been made but it is believed that there are several uncultivated areas where profitable agriculture could be carried on, and there are similar hopes that a geological survey would not be found unproductive.

#### CLIMATE

In its climate, British Honduras is certainly favoured. Trade winds, blowing from the sea over a great part of the year, keep temperatures down, in coastal areas, to a level below that of such cities as New York and Washington in the summer months. Even in the hotter months of May to October the shade temperatures do not go over 96°. Inland, in the Western District, day temperatures may exceed 100° but cooler nights are experienced. During cold spells, which may occur between November and February, the temperature may go down in Belize to 50° though the mean for this period is nearer 70°.

Rainfall shows some sharp annual variations but the mean over the last five years is sixty-three inches in Belize. Average rainfall in the North is no more than about sixty inches while in the Southern District the yearly average is nearer 175 inches.

The climate of the Colony, which in the cooler months is particularly delightful, is quite suitable for people used to temperate zones and little, if any, impairment to health is suffered from prolonged residence. The high 3,000 feet plateau of the mountain pine ridge is quite suitable as a hill station, a project which may be realized when the major road programme is accomplished.

## Chapter II: History of British Honduras

The incompleteness and the paucity of many of the records from which the history of British Honduras has to be gathered make research fascinating, but, at times, rather exasperating. The humidity of the climate has not favoured the storage of documents, but such as remain provide stories with a Ballantyne flavour of adventure.

Of the early settlement of the Colony by Maya Indians, much remains to be told; but there is ample evidence of considerable Mayan settlements all over the Colony which indicate that a population much greater than that existing at present was supported, though on a much lower standard. For the archaeologist, there is wealth of material to be unearthed.

Here, we are concerned with the history of the Colony following the discoveries in the Western Hemisphere in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Columbus is thought to have sailed down the coast in 1502, when he set out from Cuba to find a passage to the Indies.

The first Britons to set foot in the country are believed to have sailed from Jamaica about 1638. Finding abundant supplies of logwood, then much in demand for the manufacture of dyes in Europe, they began a settle-

ment which was maintained with fluctuating fortunes through 150 years of struggle and strife with the Spanish. It appeared that friendly relations and treaties between Britain and Spain made no difference to the local struggle and it was not until 1798 that an end to the skirmishes could be written.

By 1670 when Spain made a treaty ceding to Britain all lands in the West Indies and in any part of America held by the British, the settlement, near the mouth of the Belize River and at St. George's Cay, an island some ten miles east of the river mouth, included 700 white settlers, among whom was the famous Admiral John Benbow. About this time, the prosperity of the settlement was brought to the notice of King Charles II by a report of the Governor of Jamaica that it had 'increased His Majesty's Customs and the natural commerce more than any of His Majesty's Colonies'.

An early reference to slaves was included in a report of an attack by the Spanish some distance inland at Labouring Creek in 1754, when it was said that, principally by their efforts, the raiders were repulsed. In 1779, the Spanish seem to have had some success when they captured and carried away a great many of the settlers at St. George's Cay. Subsequently, after suffering ill-treatment in Mexico and Cuba, the captives were allowed to return. A further development occurred in 1786, when, by the Treaty of London, Great Britain gave up her claims to the Mosquito Coast in return for Spanish recognition of the existing settlement in British Honduras, but this arrangement seems either not to have been brought to the notice of, or to have been disregarded by, the Spanish in the Caribbean area, as the attacks continued. In their final effort in 1798, they appear to have employed larger forces than ever before and little attention seems to have been given to achieving surprise for the local settlers had time for a number of parleys and to gather together their forces inferior in point of fighting strength. The action at St. George's Cay was decisive and final and, today, the anniversary is honoured by a public holiday accompanied by patriotic celebrations.

Events in Mexico from 1848 to 1867 had their repercussions in British Honduras, for the rebellion of the Indians of Yucatan in 1849 caused many Spaniards to settle in the northern part of the Colony. When in 1867 Mexico finally overthrew the Spanish administration, Indians made repeated raids into the Colony until a garrison of Imperial Troops finally made such incursions unremunerative.

From the very first beginnings of the settlement, until recent times, a greater measure of freedom to manage their own affairs appears to have been accorded to the people of British Honduras than was given to the settlers in other colonies. Until 1786, persons were appointed at an annual public meeting to act as Magistrates, on whom the responsibility of discharging executive and judicial functions devolved

The King in 1765 gave a 'constitution to the people' founded on their ancient customs, the most important of which were legislating by public meetings and the election of magistrates annually by the free suffrage of the people. Admiral Sir William Burnaby, accompanied by Captain Cook,

was sent to the Colony to codify the laws and customs and to arrange for the inhabitants of the Colony to be put into full possession of their lands and associated rights.

Following the declaration of the settlement as a Colony in 1862, a Lieutenant-Governor, subordinate to the Governor of Jamaica, was appointed, and in 1870 he became the President of a newly constituted Legislative Assembly the composition of which included five official, and not less than four unofficial members.

Independence of Jamaica came in 1884 with the appointment of a Governor and a Commander-in-Chief.

The economic disaster, following a hurricane which overwhelmed Belize and the adjacent countryside in 1931, necessitated the seeking of the aid of the Imperial Exchequer and the subsequent surrender of the control of finance. As a result, major changes in the constitution were made in 1935 by the passing of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance, 1935, and, after amendments to this Ordinance in 1938 and 1945, the Legislative Council now consists of the Governor, as President, three official and ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated and six elected from five constituencies. The Governor was given power, in certain circumstances, to assent to any bill which the Council failed to pass.

The main economy of British Honduras has been based, since the first settlement, on her forests. By the time the demand for logwood declined, the mahogany tree had already become a more profitable export and it has remained for a century the principal forest product. Other exports from the forest have centred upon cedar, pine and the sapodilla tree, from which chicle gum is extracted. Coconuts have also been an important export.

With a forest tradition ingrained in him, the average British Honduran has not taken heed of exhortations to settle on the land, and indeed the experiences of some of the settlers have not been encouraging, for most of them have only eked out a meagre living. Bananas were flourishing when the Stann Creek railway project was begun in 1905 to improve transportation, but an imported disease has relegated banana growing to an insignificant position.

The citrus industry in the Stann Creek Valley is now well established and although during the latter half of the war a government subsidy to growers became necessary, due to temporary loss of markets, the original position had been regained toward the end of 1946. A sugar factory, erected in the sugar cane growing area in the northern plain in 1935, has not been productive of a high grade sugar, and it has not supplied, in entirety, the requirements of the Colony. Rum distilleries in the same neighbourhood produce a spirit which has only a local market.

The social development of the peoples of British Honduras has not, on the whole, been characterized by the sudden spurts which appear to have marked progress in other countries; rather, to the casual observer, has it been by almost imperceptible change year by year. The Education Ordinance of 1892

established a Board of Education, with the Governor as Chairman, to promote education, to provide for the administration of schools, and to allot grants in aid from funds voted by the legislature. In 1915 the Governor with the consent of the Board was empowered to declare compulsory school attendance areas. Noteworthy improvements in the standard of teaching recently have followed the provision of better training facilities and stimulation has come from the institution of annual Teachers' Vacation Courses.

Public Health appears to have received its chief impetus in the latter half of the last century, but administrators of the Public Health Ordinances are always somewhat discouraged by the absence of proper water supplies and sewerage systems. An improved water supply for Belize is being installed.

It was not until 1945 that a Social Welfare Officer was appointed, and he was gravely handicapped by the absence of any voluntary organizations on which he could found the nucleus of a Social Welfare Scheme. There were no handicrafts, no co-operative or marketing unions, and no village community centres; but there were Credit Unions, the first of which was established only a short time before he arrived. With the return from Jamaica of an officer sent for handicraft training, handicrafts were introduced to the main institutions, the Prison, the Mental Hospital and the Industrial School for boys, which has been established in the Stann Creek Valley in 1926. With the resignation of the first Social Welfare Officer, a Social Welfare and Development Officer was appointed and social Welfare work was associated with the development of the Colony.

## Chapter III: Administration

The administration and government of the Colony devolve upon the Governor and an Executive Council, constituted by Royal Instructions given in 1936 and in 1945, and providing for three *ex-officio* members and of such persons, as the Governor may appoint in accordance with the instructions. At the close of the year, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary were the *ex-officio* members and there were four other appointments. Appointments are for a period of three years.

The Legislative Council, in its present form, is constituted by the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance of 1935 together with the amendment Ordinance of 1945; the composition, with the Governor as President, being three *ex-officio* members (the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary, and the Attorney General) ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated by the Governor in pursuance of Royal Instructions received in 1936 and 1945, and six elected from five constituencies, there being two members for the Belize District.

All questions are decided by a majority of the votes given, the Governor having an original, and also a casting vote, but of the greatest interest to Un-

official Members of the Council is the provision in the 1935 enactment of what are described as the Governor's reserve powers, which, briefly, give him the authority to declare his assent to any bill, resolution or vote, which he considers necessary in the interests of public order or good government, or to secure detailed control of the finances of the Colony, while financial assistance is being received from His Majesty's Exchequer. In making any such declaration, the Governor is required to inform the Council of his reasons and to report his action to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Governor may refuse to give his assent to any bill passed by the Legislative Council, or he may reserve his assent for the signification of the approval of His Majesty; no law is effective until it has received his assent.

The Judiciary consists of a Chief Justice and a Magistrate for the City of Belize. In the out-districts judicial functions are exercised by the District Commissioners. In addition, two or more Justices of the Peace may exercise the judicial functions of a District Commissioner. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, who is appointed by Letters Patent under the Public Seal of the Colony by the Governor. One of the officers of the Court is the Registrar General, who has power to administer oaths and take solemn declarations, or affirmations in lieu of oaths.

Justices of the Peace are appointed by the Governor by Warrant under his hand and under Public Seal; they may be appointed for the whole Colony, or for a district, or for a portion of a district. Similarly they may be removed by warrant.

Administratively the Colony is divided into five districts, of which the Belize District, containing the capital, has the largest population. The other districts are the Northern with headquarters at Corozal, the Western, whose administrative headquarters are at El Cayo, the Stann Creek District administered from Stann Creek town, and the Toledo District in the South with Punta Gorda as the only important town. The Commissioner for each district, excepting Belize, exercises the prescribed judicial functions and acts, at the same time, as Sub-Treasurer, Sub-Collector of Customs and District Postmaster. Except in one district the Commissioner is also chairman of the local Town Board.

Town Boards are constituted under the District Town Boards Ordinance of 1938, which gives power to the Governor in Council to add to, or delete from, the list of towns to which the Ordinance applies. Boards may be either wholly nominated, or partly nominated and partly elected: nominated members are appointed by the Governor.

A Town Board is required to meet each quarter and at such other times as required by its rules or when convened by the Chairman, who is appointed either by the Governor or from one of their number as he may direct. It is entrusted with the duty of attending to the good government of the town, and it may establish markets, slaughter-houses, baths and washhouses, may provide for public lighting, the naming and numbering of its streets, and carry on such other duties as the Governor orders by notice in the *Gazette*.

## Chapter IV: Weights and Measures

The standard Imperial Weights and Measures are prescribed by the Weights and Measures Ordinance, Chapter 63 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, which places on the Superintendent of Police the duties of inspection of weights and measures at least once in every three months.

The legal standards to be used are:

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| (a) for articles sold by weight                     | .. .. | Imperial troy and avoirdupois                             |
| (b) for capacity (liquids and dry goods)            |       | Imperial gallon   |
| (c) for capacity (goods usually sold by the bushel) | .. .. | Bushel of eight Imperial gallons or 80 pounds avoirdupois |
| (d) for extension                                   | .. .. | Standard yard measure of 36 inches.                       |

A copy or model of the standards must be kept in the office of each District Commissioner and inspections are to be made at least once in every three months.

## Chapter V: Newspapers and Periodicals

There are two newspapers published in the Colony, the *Daily Clarion*, a small one sheet evening issue and the *Belize Billboard*, a bi-weekly issue.

For official purposes, the *Government Gazette* is issued weekly and is available to private subscribers on payment of an annual subscription of five dollars.

There are no other regular publications and, in the main, people of British Honduras rely upon the wireless set and certain weekly American publications for their news of the world.

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**LIST OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT**

**PRINTING OFFICE, BRITISH HONDURAS**

**\$**

1.	Agricultural Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
2.	Customs Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
3.	Education Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
4.	Forestry Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
5.	Labour Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
6.	Medical Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.50
7.	Survey Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	.25
8.	Financial Statements	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
9.	Sessional Papers	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
10.	Minutes of the Legislative Council (bound vols.)				..	..	1.00
11.	Ordinances (Bound vols.)	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
12.	„ (Single copies)	..	..	..	..	..	.15
13.	S. R. & Os. (Bound vols.)	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
14.	S. R. & Os. (Single copies)	..	..	..	..	..	.15
15.	Brief Sketch of British Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	.25
16.	Table of Distances in British Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	.10
17.	Dodd's Report on the Belize Harbour	..	..	..	..	..	.50
18.	Archives of British Honduras (Per volume)		..	..	..	..	2.00
	„ „ „ (Set of three volumes)		..	..	..	..	5.00
19.	Board of Education Rules	..	..	..	..	..	.15
20.	Post Office Guide	..	..	..	..	..	.25
21.	Report of the Committee of Nutrition on the Colony of British Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
22.	Report of British Guiana and British Honduras Settlement Commission	..	..	..	..	..	1.50
23.	Customs Tariff—Ordinance 1 of 1935	..	..	..	..	..	.15
24.	Nutrition in the Colonial Empire—Part I..	..	..	..	..	..	.75
25.	Summary of Information regarding Nutrition in the Colonial Empire—Part II	..	..	..	..	..	.65

							\$
26.	West India Royal Commission Report	..	..	..	..	..	1.75
27.	„ „ „ Recommendations	..					.10
28.	West India Royal Commission Report—Statement of Actions Taken on Recommendations	..	..	..	..	..	.50
29.	C. Hummel's Forestry Report	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
30.	Housing in the West Indies	..	..	..	..	..	.30
31.	Enquiry into the Educational System of British Honduras	..					1.50
32.	Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
33.	Government Gazette—single copies	..	..	..	..	..	.15
	subscription per year	..	..	..	..	..	5.00
34.	Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of British Honduras	..	..	..	..	..	.25
35.	Cost of Education	..	..	..	..	..	.10
36.	Social Welfare (a series of nine broadcasts made by the B.B.C.)						.10
37.	Report of the Development Planning Committee, 1946	..					1.00

#### MAPS

1. Cadastral Plan of Belize, 200 feet to 1 inch.
2. Sectional Map of the Colony, 4 miles to 1 inch.
3. Small Scale Map, suitable for reports.

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# REPORT ON BRITISH HONDURAS 1950.

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## **PART I**

### **General Review**

The year opened in an atmosphere of political tension as a result of the devaluation of the British Honduras dollar on the 31st December, 1949, to the fixed rate of \$4.00 to the £. Previously the local dollar was at parity with the U.S. dollar and—unique among British Colonial currencies—was so left when the £ was devalued in September 1949. This position proved untenable and the change in value was essential in the interests of the Colony's economy. Owing to the traditional local dependence on United States sources of supply, the cost of living was bound to be adversely affected by such a change, but His Majesty's Government made a special grant of \$450,000 for the year so as to enable the application of subsidisation measures to cushion the effects of devaluation, particularly in so far as the poorer classes are concerned.

Devaluation however cleared the way for a greatly accelerated programme of development. The Colonial Development Corporation, which suspended all its plans between September and December 1949, pressed ahead with a number of schemes such as the building of an hotel in Belize, the production of lacatan bananas, a ramie project and an animal husbandry scheme. A number of commercial investors, both British and American, embarked upon schemes for the production of bananas, coconuts, tannic acid, pineapples and citrus. The timber industry enjoyed a qualified revival, and in particular there was an export market in the British Caribbean Colonies for all dressed pine of reasonable quality that could be produced. A partial hold back on exports was however imposed by the Government in order to take care of the local requirements. In the chicle industry United States buyers again took all first grade gum that could be produced.

British Honduras was granted a sugar export quota of 25,000 tons per annum by His Majesty's Government and plans were prepared by Government for the multiplication of sugar cane material to assist private enterprise to take up this quota.

Several development and welfare grants were made to British Honduras during the year. These may be summarised as follows:—

Road development	\$584,200
Building development	\$ 74,824
Social Development, Surveys &	
Economic development	\$441,264
Training of personnel	\$ 11,884.

A Development Commissioner was appointed in charge of the expanding development programme, and a 10 year Development plan was in the final stages of preparation by the end of the year.

There have been no significant developments in the dispute with Guatemala over British Honduras. The Government of Guatemala has maintained its closure of the frontier.

The following honours were conferred upon British Honduras residents during the year:—

*New Year*

The Honourable Mr. W. H. Courtenay, to be an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

*King's Birthday*

His Excellency the Governor Mr. R. H. Garvey, C.M.G., M.B.E., to be a Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

The Honourable Mr. R. H. Eyles, B.E.M., J.P., to be an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Mr. A. F. A. Lamb, late Conservator of Forests, to be an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Mr. Andres Patricio Enriques, Headmaster, San Antonio School, Cayo, to be a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

## PART II

### Chapter I: Population

At a Census taken in April, 1946, the population of the Colony was 59,220, and at the end of 1950 it was estimated to be 66,892, comprising 28,722 males and 30,498 females. Intermixing is such that racial classification of the population is difficult and unreliable, but it may be said that the Northern and Western Districts are inhabited principally by the descendants of Spanish and Maya Indian peoples. In the Capital, the 'Creoles' (descendants of the early settlers) are in the majority though there are a large number of people of Latin extraction from the neighbouring republics, and of Syrians and Chinese. There is a limited number of Europeans and United States nationals. There is in the southern Districts of Stann Creek and Toledo, a predominance of Caribs but Maya Indians have some large settlements in the extreme South.

The estimated population was distributed in the Districts of the Colony as follows:

<i>District</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Area in Square Miles</i>	<i>Persons per Square Mile</i>
Belize .. ..	29,756	1,623	18.33
Corozal .. ..	7,710	718	10.74
Orange Walk ..	6,380	1,829	3.41
Stann Creek ..	7,253	840	8.63
Toledo .. ..	7,034	2,125	3.31
Cayo .. ..	8,759	1,731	5.06
<b>The Colony ..</b>	<b>66,892</b>	<b>8,866</b>	<b>7.54</b>

The population of the leading towns at the 1946 Census was as follows:

<i>Persons</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Belize .. .. 21,886	Benque Viejo .. 1,264
Corozal .. .. 2,190	Stann Creek .. 3,414
Orange Walk .. 1,395	Punta Gorda .. 1,375.
Cayo .. .. 1,548	

A review of the 1931 and 1946 census figures shows increases in the population of all the Districts except the Northern, which declined 3.81 per cent., although the preponderance of births over deaths from year to year during the intervening period would have led one to expect an increase. This position rather supports the general view of a trend to concentration in Belize due to the exodus, from the agriculturally important Northern District, of small-planters, who, it is common belief, have forsaken the land in search of more lucrative occupations. The slightest margin of increase is to be observed in the Toledo District (2.42 per cent.), which is no doubt due partly to abnormal death rates throughout the years 1931 to 1946, (which reached the alarming figure of 53.6 in 1945), and partly to migration from the District of its residents in search of employment.

Births per thousand of the population increased from 38.90 in 1949 to 39.73. Deaths per thousand were recorded at 12.63 as against 13.41 in 1949. The infantile mortality rate is highest in the Toledo District with its large Maya population, which recorded rates of over 18 per cent. The lowest rate recorded is that of Orange Walk—6.29. The rates in the other Districts are as follows: Belize 9.75; Corozal 14.76; Stann Creek 7.55; Cayo 9.34 and for the Colony 10.65.

## Chapter II: Occupations, Wages, Labour Organization

### PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS

In British Honduras the employment available in the forest industries, the mainstay of the Colony's economy, is largely seasonal, timber extraction operations being principally confined to the first six months of the year when the dry weather permits logging over primitive roads, while chicle bleeding is carried out in the wet months, July to February, as rains induce a good flow of gum from the trees. Owing to development schemes employment in agricultural undertakings increased considerably during the year.

A statement of the particulars of the employment in the principal occupations on the 31st December, 1950, follows:—

Industry or Occupation	Number of employers consulted	Number employed	Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<b>PRIMARY PRODUCTION</b>					
<i>Mahogany</i> Labourers	—	651	\$22.00 to \$24.00 per month plus rations at \$2.50 per week.	50	During felling and/or logging periods overtime (in form of extra tasks) varies from \$5.00 to \$25.00 a month additional.
Vehicle Drivers (and repair men)	—	80	\$60.00 to \$75.00 per month and rations at \$3.50 per week.	50	
Other workers	—	103	\$30.00 a month and rations at \$3.50 per week.		
<b>Total</b>	10	834			

Industry or Occupation	Number of employers consulted	Number employed	Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<i>Chicle (Extraction of Sapodilla Gum) Bleeders</i>	—	1,562	Piece rate of 50¢ a lb. average. Average earnings \$75.00 a month.	50	
Muleteers (and other workers)	—	28	\$25.00 to \$50.00 a month.		
	40	1,590			
<i>Pine and other secondary woods</i>					
Labourers working in the forest at felling, etc.	—	248	\$1.80 a day	56	
Vehicle Drivers (and repair men)	—	56	\$50.00 to \$65.00 a month.		
Other workers	—	28	\$1.60 a day		
	14	332			
<i>Agriculture</i>					
Cane fields—Male	15	145	\$1.50 a day	48	
Coconuts— Male	5	94	\$1.25 to \$1.75 day		
Citrus orchards "	16	847	\$1.50 a day		
Banana plantations	2	445			
Other agricultural undertakings	8	540	\$1.25 to \$1.75 day		
	46	2,071			
Total, Primary Production	117	4,827			
<i>SECONDARY PRODUCTION</i>					
<i>Sawmills</i>					
Supervisors and Clerical workers	—	71	\$2.75 to \$5.00 day	56	
Machinery attendants & operators	—	183	\$2.00 to \$5.00 a day		
Labourers handling lumber	—	528	\$1.50 to \$2.25 a day		
Total	21	782			

Industry or Occupation	Number of employers consulted	Number employed	Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
<i>Factories &amp; Other Industrial Establishments</i>					
Aerated Water—					
Males	4	32	\$3.50 to \$15.00 per week	45	
Females	--	35	\$3.00 to \$12.00 per week		
Canning grapefruit juice—					
Males	1	75	\$1.20 to \$3.00 a day		
Canning grapefruit section—					
Males	1	80	\$1.60 a day average earnings	48	
Females	--	160	\$2.25 a day average earnings		
Cigarettes—					
Males	1	19	\$3.00 to \$14.00 per week		
Females	—	20	\$4.00 to \$12.00 per week		
Mangrove Bark—					
Males	1	47	\$1.60 a day		
Ice—					
Males	3	9	\$1.00 to \$1.50 a day	48	
Soap—					
Males	2	17	\$9.00 to \$20.00 per week	45	
Females	—	1	\$8.00 per week		
Bakeries—					
Males	7	45	\$3.00 to \$18.00 per week	50	
Blacksmith & repair machine shops	9	45	\$8.00 to \$25.00 per week		
Cabinet and other Woodworking shops	14	60	\$2.25 to \$3.00 a day	48	
Printing establishments	5	40	\$3.00 to \$15.00 per week		
Shoe repairing and manufacturing shops	15	85	\$6.00 to \$9.00 per week	48	
Tailoring establishments	12	46	\$2.50 to \$9.00 per week		
Tinmith shops	3	6	\$1.68 to \$2.50 a day	48	
Total	78	822			
Boat Building and Repairing	6	125	25¢ to 52¢ per hour	48	Employment irregular
Construction of Hotel, Belize Labourers	1	46	17½¢ to 20¢ an hour plus cost of living allowance		

Industry or Occupation	Number of employers consulted	Number employed	Wage or earnings	Approximate average hours worked per week	Remarks
Tradesmen	—	29	27¢ to 40¢ an hour plus cost of living allowance		
	1	75			
<i>Public Works Dpt.</i>					
Road labourers	—	1,013	\$1.68 to \$1.82 a day		
Lorry drivers	—	62	\$2.32 to \$2.64 a day		
Carpenters	—	122	\$2.40 to \$3.20 a day	48	
Other Tradesmen	—	181	\$2.00 to \$4.10 a day		
Total	—	1,378			
Total, Secondary Production	107	3,182			
<i>SERVICE</i>					
<i>Transport of goods by Sea</i>					
(i) Handling general cargo	4	210	44¢ per hour and free food		Intermittent employment averaging 6 days a month
(ii) Mahogany logs	1	64			
(iii) Dock labourers	6	120	35c. per hour		
Total	11	394			
<i>Forest Department</i>					
Labourers—Male	—	46	\$1.72 a day—average earnings	48	
Total	—	46			
<i>Health Department</i>					
Labourers	—	35	\$1.45 to \$1.65 a day		
Cartmen	—	7	\$1.51 to \$1.92 a day		
Vehicle drivers	—	3	\$2.19 to \$2.50 a day	44	
Total	—	45			
<i>Belize City Council</i>					
Labourers	—	20	\$1.74 to \$2.50 a day	48	
	—	10	\$1.30 to \$2.90 a day		
Total	—	30			
<i>Agricultural Dept.</i>					
Labourers	—	48	\$1.65 to \$1.76 a day	48	
Total	—	48			
Total Services	15	563			
GRAND TOTAL	239	8,572			

*Cost of Living*

From a survey held by the Labour Department in 1942 embracing 100 working class families in Belize it was found that price levels were then 34.7 per cent above pre-war conditions and that the average amounts paid out weekly under the main groups of household expenditure were as follows:—

Food .. .. .	\$7.00
Clothing .. .. .	1.37
Rent .. .. .	1.20
Fuel, Light and Washing ..	0.98
Other Items .. .. .	2.30
	<hr/>
	\$12.95
	<hr/>

The trend of the cost of living during 1950 (September 1939 = 100) is shown by the indices hereunder:

1st January .. .. .	203	1st July .. .. .	201
1st February .. .. .	204	1st August .. .. .	202
1st March .. .. .	208	1st September .. .. .	206
1st April .. .. .	202	1st October .. .. .	213
1st May .. .. .	202	1st November .. .. .	221
1st June .. .. .	201	1st December .. .. .	222
		31st December .. .. .	222

No accurate records are available as to the cost of living for Europeans but the rates for hotels and boarding houses vary from \$4.00 to \$8.00 a day, and from \$90.00 to \$125.00 a month.

## LABOUR ORGANIZATION

*Size and Work of the Labour Department.*

The Labour Department was established in 1939 and its duties follow closely those of similar departments in other colonies. Its regular staff consists of the Labour Officer, a Labour Inspector, one Second Class Clerk and an office messenger. Owing to increased work on the inception of Relief work for the unemployed during August a temporary clerk was engaged to attend to the keeping of records relating to the unemployed.

*Trade Unions*

There were six trade unions on the register at the end of 1950. Particulars of these and their memberships on the 31st December, 1950, are:—

(a) The British Honduras General Workers Union (formed in 1939), a general union of all classes of workers, including domestic servants. Its headquarters are in Belize, and with its nine branches in the District areas the number of financial members was reported as 2,629, of whom 212 were females.

(b) The Carpenters, Cabinet Makers and Painters Union, established in 1944, whose membership is restricted to the classes of workers named. The number of members was stated to be 130.



(c) The National Labour Union, which was registered during 1947, with a nominal membership of 178 members. This Union is confined to labourers only, but its Rules provide for the admission of other classes of workers if it can be proven that they cannot obtain membership with any other trade union.

(d) The British Honduras Civil Service Association which was originally formed in 1922, and became a registered trade union on the 26th January, 1948. There were 356 names on the roll of members.

(e) The British Honduras Mercantile Clerks Union of shop assistants, and clerical workers, which was registered on the 14th July, 1948. The membership was stated to be 189, inclusive of 98 females.

(f) The British Honduras Development Union, formed in March, 1950, and registered during October, with its headquarters in the town of Stann Creek is a general union embracing all classes of workers. Its nominal membership was 386.

No associations of employers have yet been formed.

### *Labour Disputes*

A normal number of individual complaints were lodged and dealt with by the Labour Department: these involved dismissals without notice, failure to pay wages due, illegal deductions from wages, overcharges for goods at camp commissariats, compensation for accidents received in the course of work, and other matters.

One trade dispute occurred during October when an employer refused to meet the demands for increased wages by 60 stevedores engaged in the loading of timber. Illegal strike occurred and after attempts to settle the dispute by negotiation failed a Board of Arbitration was appointed which awarded a wage increase of 25 per cent. This award was of hypothetical value as the employer engaged substitute labour and the ship was loaded after a delay of seven days

### *Labour Legislation*

The relations between master and servant are controlled by the Employers and Workers Ordinance, No. 6 of 1943, which repealed and replaced previous legislation dating as far back as 1883.

A system of workmen's compensation for accidents sustained during the course of their employment was established in 1943. It follows closely the system in other West Indian colonies. Agricultural workers are included in its scope and insurance, which is not compulsory, is available from various firms operating in the Colony.

The Factories Ordinance, No. 9 of 1942, provides for the maintenance of machinery safeguards and for the regulation of the conditions of employment in factories.

The establishment and registration of Trade Unions is governed by the Trade Unions Ordinance, 1941, whilst the settlement of trade disputes may be effected by arbitration under the Trade Disputes (Arbitration and Inquiry) Ordinance, 1939, when voluntary means fail.

Other ordinances in force govern the practices of recruiting, provide for the fixing of minimum wages, and regulate the employment of women, young persons and children.

There is no legislation to provide for old age pensions, or for relief in cases of sickness. The indigent receive outdoor relief from a charity vote which is administered by the Outdoor Relief Committee and the sick are given free treatment at Government hospitals if they are found to be destitute.

No important changes in labour legislation were made in 1950.

## Chapter III: Public Finance and Taxation

### REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Up to the year 1931, when a disastrous hurricane caused severe damage in Belize and outlying settlements, the Colony had always balanced its budgets but its economy was almost entirely based on the production of mahogany, chicle, and other forest timbers. No roads had been constructed but a railway was operated in the Stann Creek Valley in connection with the banana trade.

After 1931, the revenue from forests declined and, with a heavy burden of loan charges resulting from the raising of a sterling loan of \$900,000 for re-construction purposes to make good the damage caused by the hurricane, the Colony was unable to balance its budget.

With the exception of 1947, a grant-in-aid from the Imperial Exchequer has been received each year since 1932. Apart from grant-in-aid, considerable sums have been devoted to the Colony for the development of communications, for promoting the development of Agriculture, for improving social services, and for the specialised training of local persons. The total sums granted to the Colony up to the end of 1950 may be summarised as follows:—

Grant-in-Aid .. ..	\$3,136,290
Loan in Aid .. ..	748,489
Railway conversion .. ..	169,360
Relief Schemes .. ..	410,978
Colonial Development & Welfare grants .. ..	6,301,817
Hurricane Loan (write off)	428,741
Special grant to cover losses of Commissioners of Currency	891,095.

#### 1. Accounts for the Calendar Year 1950.

The surplus brought forward from 1949 amounted to \$50,649 after taking account of \$119,822 owing on account of Colonial Development & Welfare Schemes. True revenue for 1950 amounted to \$2,693,393 while true expenditure was \$2,950,367. At the end of December 1950, there was a deficit of \$124,451 but this did not take into account a sum of \$308,053 due in respect

of Colonial Development & Welfare schemes. But for this short payment, which was due principally to the delay in the approval of a Colonial Development & Welfare grant for a plant and transport pool, there would have been a surplus of \$183,602. During 1950, the following grants were received from the United Kingdom Government:—

Grant in aid including \$100,000 for	
working balance .. .. .	\$ 380,000
Special grant in aid to cover subsidies	440,000
Special grant to make good losses of	
Commissioners of Currency ..	891,095
	<hr/>
	\$1,711,095
	<hr/>

### *Revenue.*

At \$2,693,393, true revenue was over \$450,000 more than in 1949 and nearly \$250,000 more than in 1948 after making adjustment for electric light receipts. Income tax revenue reached \$500,000 for the first time and land tax was over \$107,000 representing an increase over the 1949 income of \$65,000. Customs Receipts at \$1,301,260 were \$320,000 more than they were in 1949, over \$240,000 more than in 1948 and about \$73,000 more than in 1947 which was a record year. Income from the sale of postage stamps was very disappointing due to the fact that the present issue of stamps is no longer in demand by philatelists. Actual revenue fell short of the estimate of \$70,000 by over \$20,000. Income from royalties on forest produce amounted to over \$92,000, while the estimate for the year was only \$35,000.

Comparative figures of revenue for 3 years are shown below for the principal heads:—

	1948	1949	1950
	\$	\$	\$
Customs, including Surtaxes	1,061,040	980,707	1,301,260
Internal Taxation .. ..	752,711	771,396	924,683
Revenue from Government			
Property .. .. .	147,060	98,348	130,850
Fees of Court or Office, etc.	179,827	143,133	135,027
Self-balancing Revenue (Posts & Telegraphs, Telephones)	202,220	188,422	117,664
Interest & Sinking Fund of repayments .. .. .	80,742	23,510	51,249
Miscellaneous .. .. .	27,797	33,749	32,660
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TRUE REVENUE .. ..	2,579,713	2,387,242	2,693,393
Colonial Development & Welfare .. .. .	528,160	555,448	955,985
Grant-in-Aid .. .. .	100,750	339,800	380,000
Special grants .. .. .	—	428,743	1,331,095
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,208,623	3,711,233	5,360,473

*Expenditure.*

The comparative figures shown below have been classified under main heads.

	1948 \$	1949 \$	1950 \$
Administration .. ..	1,457,446	1,343,024	1,447,378
Social Services (Education, Health, Prisons) .. ..	568,199	610,677	733,994
Subventions (including Sub- sidies to stabilise prices) ..	36,941	25,241	472,502
Public Debt .. .. .	157,911	83,861	101,272
Public Works Improvements	219,305	226,321	109,749
Self-balancing Expenditure (Posts, Telegraphs, Tele- phones) .. .. .	252,980	245,431	144,339
Repayment of 1931 Hurricane Loan .. .. .	—	428,743	—
Expenditure on Colonial Development & Welfare Schemes .. .. .	529,074	647,194	1,143,879
Production (Agriculture & Forestry) .. .. .	173,060	187,775	174,682
Expenditure on Relief Work	—	49,107	196,862
	<hr/> 3,394,916	<hr/> 3,847,374	<hr/> 4,524,657

Administration includes expenditure on Justice, Police, Pensions, Defence, Public Works and some minor branches of Government work.

Receipts from Electricity Supply excluded.

From these figures, it will be seen that nearly \$500,000 more was spent on Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes than in the previous year while \$430,000 was spent on subsidies on food and necessities to keep down the cost of living.

## 2. Public Debt.

The outstanding debt of the Colony at the 31st December, 1950, amounted to \$1,336,151, of which sum \$102,475 was in respect of borrowings made locally. Sinking Funds in hand amounted to \$393,119, thus giving a figure of \$943,032 as the net outstanding debt. The average rate of interest being paid on the loans remaining outstanding is 4.3 per centum per annum. During 1950, a loan of \$196,000 was raised in accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Board and Belize Housing Scheme Loan Ordinance, 1949, for the purpose of purchasing and installing a new rice mill, grain silos and warehouse, providing funds for lending to rice growers and for financing part of the cost of the Belize Housing Scheme. Of this sum, \$162,000 is for the Marketing Board and the balance of \$34,000 for the Belize Housing

Scheme. The sum was raised from the proceeds of the sale of stock to the amount of £50,646 at 97. Interest will be at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum on this amount of stock which will be known as the British Honduras  $3\frac{1}{2}$  % Inter Colonial Loan 1970.

### 3. *Assets and Liabilities.*

The statement of the Assets and Liabilities of the Colony as at 31st December, 1950, shows assets divisible as follows:—

		<i>Previous Year</i>
	\$	\$
Cash .. .. .	252,133	54,084
Investments of Various Funds ..	1,814,164	1,740,540
Advances to official and public organizations .. .. .	150,620	171,539
Deficit .. .. .	124,451	69,173
	<hr/> 2,341,368	<hr/> 2,035,336

Liabilities may be classified briefly as shown below:

Unexpended balances of loans .. ..	6,043	8,406
Deposits—Fund balances, etc. .. ..	2,322,027	2,022,169
Drafts .. .. .	13,298	4,761
	<hr/> 2,341,368	<hr/> 2,035,336

Amount due from Colonial Development & Welfare Funds not included in statement of Assets and Liabilities .. ..

308,053      119,822

In addition the following information must be given to present a true account.

	\$	\$
Public Debt of the Colony .. ..	1,336,151	1,160,503
Less accumulated Sinking Fund in hand	393,119	359,397
	<hr/> 943,032	<hr/> 801,106
Loan Investments .. .. .	691,667	511,300

### *Colonial Development & Welfare Schemes.*

During the year 40 new grants totalling £209,382 and 24 supplementary grants amounting to £157,054 were approved.

Twenty of these new grants totalling £198,984 and 14 supplementary grants totalling £157,007 were chargeable to this Colony's allocation, and were mainly for Communications and Transport (£194,713); Minor Economic Schemes (£25,000); Agriculture (£32,274); Social Services (£28,844); Education (£14,030) and Medical & Public Health (£9,271).

The other grants which were from the general West Indies Allocation were mainly in respect of Training Schemes.

An appendix is attached showing the expenditure, to the end of the year, of Schemes in progress.

#### 4. Description of the Main Heads of Taxation.

The main heads and their yield in revenue are set out below:—

	1948 \$	1949 \$	1950 \$
<i>Customs.</i>			
Import Duties .. ..	890,322	838,838	1,098,924
Export Duties .. ..	109,318	72,591	88,243
Package Tax .. ..	25,366	—	—
Harbour Dues, etc. ..	15,441	14,449	18,811
Entry Tax .. ..	20,593	53,048	83,169
Administration Charges	—	1,781	12,113
<i>Internal Taxation, etc.</i>			
Excise Duties .....	203,902	207,589	237,317
Income Tax .....	414,125	430,500	506,207
Land Tax .....	39,429	42,755	107,962
Estate Duty .....	35,161	28,011	1,779
Licences, Banks & Fire Insurance Companies .....	1,523	4,312	5,117
Other Licences: Motor Vehicles, etc. ....	25,167	29,253	33,438
Fines of Court .....	13,401	9,179	8,761
Fees of Court and Stamp Duties	15,595	23,129	18,912
Warehouse Rents .....	32,579	18,946	15,100

*Import Duties.* The tariff of import duties is largely *ad valorem* with a general duty of 27½ per centum and a preferential rate of 15 per centum. Specific duties are levied on wines, certain defined spirits and tobacco and cigarettes. Equipment for agricultural and forestry operations may be admitted free of duty under Concessions for Development.

*Export Duties* are levied upon chicle, coconuts, mahogany, cedar, pine and fish.

*Entry Tax.* This tax came into effect on 21.7.48 imposing a 1% Tax on the C.I.F. values on all goods imported into the Colony for home consumption.

*Excise Duty* is imposed on locally produced rum at the rate of \$4.50 per proof gallon if intended for consumption within the Colony. There is also a small duty on tobacco, cigars and cigarettes.

*Land Tax.* Rates of land tax vary from 2 cents an acre to 6 cents an acre according to the classification of the land. A further charge of 3 cents an

acre is levied on all land within a mile of a road which is suitable for wheeled traffic. The classification and actual rates of tax are as follows:—

“On each acre or part of an acre which is comprised of—

Savannah (wet, dry, and scrub & swamp)	2 cents
Savannah (good pasture land subject to inundation)	2 cents
Pine Ridge—1st class	4 cents
2nd class	3 cents
3rd class	2 cents
Low Forest (Alkache)	2 cents
Medium and High Forest	4 cents
High Forest	6 cents

with an additional tax of 3 cents for each acre or part of an acre which lies within one mile from a road which is maintained from public funds and is suitable for wheeled traffic, provided that the minimum additional tax in respect of any parcel of land shall be 10 cents”.

**Income Tax.** Income Tax is levied on the chargeable income of any person at the rate of 5 per centum of the first \$500 increasing by a sliding scale up to 35 per centum on that part of incomes in excess of \$19,000. A surtax on a sliding scale is also levied on chargeable income in excess of \$10,000 being 10 per centum on the first \$5,000, 15 per centum on the next \$5,000 and 20 per centum on the remainder. Company Tax is at the rate of 35 cents on every dollar of chargeable income of a Company.

**Licences, Banks and Insurance Companies.** Any establishment carrying on the business of banking pays an annual licence fee of \$500, and Insurance Companies pay a licence fee at the rate of 2½ per centum on gross premiums with a minimum fee of 25 dollars.

**Estate Duty.** Duty is chargeable on estates over \$100 based on a scale which is \$1.00 per centum on estates up to \$500 increasing to \$25.00 per centum on estates over \$50,000.

**Licences—Motor Vehicles.** An annual duty is payable on all motor vehicles varying according to the weight of the vehicle, its classification, and the purpose it serves.

**Stamp Duties.** The chief features are impositions of 3 cents on cheques, receipts and bills of exchange with 10 cents for every \$100 on promissory notes. On transfers of property and mortgages the rates are 25 and 10 cents respectively for every \$50.00 or part thereof.

**Warehouse Rents.** A charge is made on merchandise which is deposited in bond.

## 5. Customs Tariff

Broadly, the Customs Schedule of Duties may be described as a two-part *ad valorem* tariff on C.I.F. prices with specific duties on a few selected articles. Under the general tariff, the majority of the small and general importa-

tions subject to *ad valorem* duties bear a 27½ per cent imposition; under the preferential tariff the duty is one of 15 per cent.

Equipment, such as trucks, tractors, carts, wagons and agricultural implements, imported to aid in agriculture or in forestry operations, is admitted free.

Specific duties, with some qualifications, are levied on importations of cattle, on certain manufactured articles such as bicycles, boots and shoes, fuel oils and petroleum, on the chief items of food and on wines, spirits and tobacco.

Some imports, the principal of which are cutlery, plated goods and jams, etc., bear a thirty per cent levy on the General Tariff and fifteen per cent on the Preferential.

### 6. Excise

Excise Duties are confined to rum and tobacco, the rate on the former being \$4.50 per gallon if not exceeding the strength of proof and \$4.50 per proof gallon. The rates on tobacco, are now:

- (a) cigars, weighing not more than 5 lb. per 1,000 20 cents per 100  
weighing over 5 lb. per 1,000 .. .. 50 cents per 100
- (b) cigarettes weighing not more than 3 lb. per  
1,000 .. .. 15 cents per 100  
weighing over 3 lb. per 1,000 .. .. 30 cents per 100
- (c) manufactured .. .. 60 cents per lb.

### 7. Income Tax

Income Tax on individuals is payable at the following rates:

		\$			
On the first	500	of Chargeable Income			5%
„ next	500	„	„		6%
„ „	500	„	„		8%
„ „	500	„	„		10%
„ „	500	„	„		12½%
„ „	500	„	„		15%
„ „	500	„	„		17½%
„ „	1,000	„	„		20%
„ „	4,500	„	„		25%
„ „	10,000	„	„		30%
On all amounts above \$19,000		„	„		35%

The rates of Surtax on Individuals are:

On the first \$5,000 in excess of \$10,000 of Chargeable Income	10%
On the next \$5,000 .. .. .	15%
On the remainder .. .. .	20%

The tax on Companies is 35%



*Incidence of Income Tax*  
Tax Payable

Gross Income \$	Single Person \$	Married Man \$	Married man with one child \$	Married Man with two children \$
1,000	20.00	5.00	—	—
1,500	46.00	28.00	17.50	7.50
2,000	79.00	55.00	43.00	31.00
3,000	170.00	135.00	115.00	95.00
4,000	300.00	252.50	222.50	195.00
5,000	470.00	410.00	370.00	335.00
6,000	695.00	620.00	570.00	530.00
7,000	945.00	870.00	820.00	770.00
8,000	1,195.00	1,120.00	1,070.00	1,020.00
9,000	1,445.00	1,370.00	1,320.00	1,270.00
10,000	1,695.00	1,620.00	1,570.50	1,520.00
15,000	3,595.00	3,475.00	3,395.00	3,315.00
20,000	5,795.00	5,660.00	5,570.00	5,480.00
35,000	13,995.00	13,850.00	13,720.00	13,610.00

Deductions allowed against gross income are:

Personal allowance	..	..	..	..	\$500
Wife	..	..	..	..	\$300
Each child	..	..	..	..	\$200
Dependent relative					\$125
Earned Income 1/10 of gross income up to ..					\$500
Life Insurance Premiums up to a certain limit					
Gifts to charity.					

### 8. Estate Duty

Under the provisions of an Ordinance in 1927, as amended in 1949, Estate Duty is payable according to a general scale as follows:

*When the amount on which  
duty is chargeable*

*Estate duty shall be  
payable at the rate  
per centum of—*

Exceeds	\$100 but does not exceed	\$500	\$1.00
..	500	2,000	1.50
..	2,000	4,000	2.00
..	4,000	6,000	3.00
..	6,000	10,000	3.50
..	10,000	15,000	5.00
..	15,000	20,000	7.50
..	20,000	25,000	10.00
..	25,000	30,000	12.50
..	30,000	35,000	15.00
..	35,000	40,000	17.50
..	40,000	45,000	20.00
..	45,000	50,000	22.50
..	50,000		25.00

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES IN PROGRESS.

No.	Title of Scheme	Total Expenditure to 31.12.50	Total Expenditure Other Sources	Remarks
D.13B (h)	Library for Social Welfare Officer	\$130.01		Approved in 1945
D.13B (i)	Prizes for Small Farms	751.18		" 1945
D.13C (f)	Construction of Sea Wall at St. George's Caye	1,988.92		" 1945
D.13C (aj)	Improvement of Water Supply, Corozal	897.48		" 1950
D.13C (ak)	Improvement of the Main Street, Orange Walk	1,145.66		" 1950
D.13C (al)	Filling of low-lying areas, Stann Creek	No expenditure		" 1950
D.13C (am)	Improvement of Water Supply, Punta Gorda	No expenditure		" 1950
D.13C (an)	Improvement of Streets, Monkey River	591.09		" 1950
D.201A (q)	Secondment of Excise Inspector from Jamaica	654.78		" 1948
D.201A (y)	Visit of Supt. of Prisons to Richmond Prison Farm, Jamaica	291.93		" 1950
D.229A & B	Extension of Food Production	147,090.30		" 1943
D.350 & D.350A	Social Welfare Officer	33,421.96		" 1944 & 1948
D.381	Rehabilitation of Schools	41,711.33	\$16,000 (General Revenue)	" 1944
D.695	Training of Surveyors	3,601.13		" 1946
D.787A & B	Hector Creek Road	647,627.84		" 1947, 1948 & 1950
D.807 & D.807A	Belize Water Supply	92,717.26	\$69,546 (Baron Bliss Trust & General Revenue)	" 1947 & 1949
D.951 & D.951A	Forest Regeneration Plan	73,850.68		" 1948
D.981A, B & C	Baking Pot Central Farm	85,368.60		" 1949
D.1010 & D.1010A	Technical High School	68,455.02		" 1948
D.1020A & B	Construction of Rural Dispensaries	47,268.47		" 1948 & 1950
D.1056	Reconstruction of Streets of Belize	31,440.83	\$20,000 (Belize City Council)	" 1949
D.1058 & D.1058B	Feeder Roads	289,823.51		" 1949 & 1950
D.1058A	Feeder Roads Part II	122,212.22		" 1950

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES IN PROGRESS—(continued)

No.	Title of Scheme	Total Expenditure to 31.12.50	Total Expenditure Other Sources	Remarks
D.1108	Training of Sanitary Inspectors	964.17		Approved in 1949 & 1950
D.1108 (10)	Training of Mr. G. M. Smith at the Richmond Prison Farm, Jamaica	206.78		" 1949
D.1108 (78)	Training of Asst. Handicraft Instructress in Handicraft in Jamaica	513.93		" 1950
D.1108 (76)	Training of Nurses in Public Health Work	1,205.78		" 1950
D.1215	Survey, Roaring Creek-Middlesex Road	5,032.07		" 1949
D.1236	Livestock Officer	6,405.57		" 1950
D.1287A & B	Roaring Creek-Middlesex Road	368,165.21	\$45,250 (General Revenue)	" 1950
D.1296	Extension of Belize Hospital	11,893.05		" 1950
D.1286	Little Pine Ridge Road	7,227.32		" 1950
D.1108 (61)	Agricultural Training Course	457.93		" 1950
D.1108 (19)	Training of a Nurse in V.D. Work in Trinidad	1,001.00		" 1950
D.1118	Belize Housing Scheme	71,941.61	\$40,000 (Loan Funds)	" 1950
D.1319	Yarborough Approach Road	No expenditure		" 1950
D.1343	Crooked Tree School	1,714.97		" 1950
D.1366	Minor Economic Schemes	No expenditure		" 1950
D.1377	Training of Rural Health Nurses	416.13		" 1950
D.1385	Vacation Course for Teachers	798.51		" 1950
D.1421	Improvements to the "Battlefield" Belize Fishery Development	6,039.71	\$3,100 (City Council)	" 1950
D.1440	Preliminary Geological Survey of Br. Honduras	456.00		" 1950
D.1441	Canada Hill-False Creek Road	4,931.10		" 1950
D.1447	Purchase of Road Building Equipment	18,575.31		" 1950
D.1451	Reorganization of the Social Welfare Dept.	341,363.50		" 1950
D.1454	Survey of Port Development at Commerce Bight	5,517.83		" 1950
D.1398		No expenditure		" 1950

## COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES IN PROGRESS—(continued)

No.	Title of Scheme	Total Expenditure to 31.12.50	Total Expenditure Other Sources	Remarks
D.1375	Agricultural Credit Fund	No expenditure		Approved in 1950
D.1114 & D.1114A	Visit of Rice Irrigation Engineer	Administered by Colonial Office		" 1949 & 1950
D.1445	Public Relations Officer	)		" 1950
D.1438	Rural Fire Service	No expenditure		" 1950
D.1444	Allowances to Director of Agriculture & Conservator of Forests	)		" 1950
D.1429A	Home Economics, Puerto Rico	)		" 1950
D.333A (i)	Training of Mr. A. S. Frankson in Educa- tional Methods	Administered by Colonial Office		" 1950
D.1108 (7)	Training in Income Tax and Accountancy in U.K. of Mr. C. L. Grant	)		" 1950
D.1108 (70)	Training of a Nurse in Health Work	335.00		" 1950
D.1443	Development Commissioner	1,857.73		" 1950
D.1108 (77)	Training of Assistant Social Development Officer in Probation Work	No expenditure		" 1950
D.1108 (79)	Training of two officers in Customs & Excise Work	)		" 1950
D.201A (ab)	Visit of Consultant to advise on Electricity Supply in Belize	No expenditure		" 1950
D.1108 (2)	Training of Mr. A. J. Francisco at South West Essex Technical College	Administered by Colonial Office		" 1949
D.694	Agricultural Scholarship to Mr. E. G. Rus- sell at Imperial College of Tropical Agri- culture, Trinidad	)		" 1949
R.358	Forest Research Scheme	54.60		" 1949
D.1334	Employment of a Dispenser Tutor	No expenditure		" 1950

# Chapter IV: Currency and Banking

## CURRENCY

### *Standard and Legal Tender*

The standard of currency is the British Honduras dollar which was of the equivalent value of the dollar of the United States of America until the exchange rate was changed to \$4.00 to the £ on 31st December, 1949. Currency notes in denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, and \$10 issued by the Currency Commissioners are legal tender up to any amount. Subsidiary silver currency is legal tender in payment of any amount not exceeding ten dollars but coins of bronze, nickel or mixed metal in five cent or one cent pieces are legal tender up to fifty cents only.

### *Circulation*

The note circulation of the Colony, which stood at \$283,536 at the 31st December, 1939, expanded to \$1,044,949 at the end of 1950. The figures for each denomination were as follows:

				Number of Notes	Amount \$	
\$1	..	..	..	116,907	116,907	
\$2	..	..	..	57,641	115,282	
\$5	..	..	..	99,538	497,690	
\$10	..	..	..	31,507	315,070	\$1,044,949

This figure represented an increase of \$207,306 over the quantity in circulation a year before. The reserve of notes, at the commencement of the year was \$880,000. New notes totalling \$375,000 were received during the year; the issues amounted to \$514,000 leaving a balance on hand at 31st December of \$751,000.

### *Subsidiary Currency.*

The Coin issue of the Colonial Government at the 31st December was as follows:

<i>Silver</i>		\$
50 cent pieces	..	69,952.00
25 cent pieces	..	49,388.75
10 cent pieces	..	25,739.70
5 cent pieces	..	5,546.20
<i>Mixed metal (nickel, bronze, etc.)</i>		
5 cent pieces	..	25,752.80
1 cent pieces (bronze)		14,554.01
		<hr/>
		\$190,933.46

### *Banking.*

Banking in the Colony is conducted by two Banks, the Royal Bank of Canada which was established in 1912 when the Bank of British Honduras

was purchased, and the Barclays Bank (D.C. & O.) which opened a Branch in the Colony on 4th September, 1949. These Banks provide all the usual banking services.

The Government Savings Bank, operating from the Treasury in Belize, with a branch in the administrative centre of each district, increased its deposits from \$410,632 at the 1st January, 1939, to \$1,876,252.86 at the end of 1950. The deposits during 1950, increased by \$86,992 as compared with the figures of the previous year. Account holders numbered 7,840 with an average holding of \$239.

## Chapter V: Commerce

### EXPORTS

The Colony's chief exports are mahogany and cedar logs, mahogany, cedar and pine lumber, bananas and citrus fruits and re-exports of manufactured articles.

The exports for the years 1949 and 1950 were as follows:—

				1949	1950
Domestic Exports ..	..	..	..	\$3,372,602	\$4,610,177
Re-Exports ..	..	..	..	1,192,245	169,625
Total Exports ..	..	..	..	\$4,564,847	\$4,779,802

Grapefruit Juice to the value of \$245,160 was exported during 1950 as compared with \$288,872 in 1949. The domestic exports of Chicle Gums were \$1,002,451, as against 1949 figures which were \$509,683. There has been a gradual annual increase of the exports of Pine and Mahogany lumber. The exports of Pine lumber amounted to \$1,061,887 as against \$503,985 in 1949. Mahogany lumber exported realized \$1,000,087 in 1950 and \$1,148,790 in 1949. The exports of Mahogany logs, which went principally to the United States of America, amounted to \$619,367 in 1950 as against \$128,674 in 1949. Coconuts exported in 1950 amounted to \$62,312 as against the exports in 1949 of \$82,618.

### IMPORTS

Imports for the year 1950 were \$8,787,510 (British Honduras currency), as compared with the previous year's figure of \$5,990,264. The B.H. dollar was devalued on 1st January, 1950. The imports of rice during the current year amounted to 24,965 cwt. costing \$305,820. 45,557 bags of flour (196 lb. each) cost \$604,117 in 1950, while 42,167 bags cost \$421,870 in 1949. The imports of motor cars, trucks and jeeps were 186 units to the value of \$357,077, while the previous year's imports were 77 units costing \$123,948. The imports of Cotton Piece Goods amounted to \$455,573 in 1950 and \$323,936 in 1949.

# Chapter VI: Production

## AGRICULTURE

The staff of the Department of Agriculture consisted of a Senior Agricultural Officer acting as Director of Agriculture, a Veterinary Officer, two Assistant Agricultural Officers, two Agricultural Instructors, and nine Farm Demonstrators. In addition, twelve temporary Farm Demonstrators were employed under a Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme aimed at encouraging increased local food production. The post of Director of Agriculture became vacant with the transfer of the Director of Agriculture to East Africa.

### *Crop Production.*

Production was encouraged by the favourable weather conditions following the drought of 1949 and extensive planting of local foodcrops was undertaken with satisfactory results; there was a welcome increase in the area planted to rice and beans. A fair amount of relief work was, however, necessary during the dry season and importations of staple foods were continued until local plantings could be harvested later in the year.

### *Livestock.*

Livestock suffered during the dry season but pastures made rapid growth with the onset of the rains, and fodder supplies improved. No major outbreaks of disease were reported. The estimated livestock population remained at the 1949 figure. For the first time in many years the full fresh meat requirements of the Colony were met without having recourse to imported stock.

## ORGANISATION AND DESTINATION OF PRODUCTION

### *Grain Crops.*

Maize, the staple food of the bulk of the population, was produced in satisfactory quantity as a result of the return of normal weather conditions; not only were individual needs met but a substantial balance was available for purchase by the Marketing Board.

Rice production increased considerably though floods caused losses in the main producing district of Toledo.

### *Beans.*

The 1950—51 bean crop was satisfactory but present colony production is only sufficient to meet two or three months demand.

### *Bananas.*

A considerable increase in the area planted to bananas took place in the Stann Creek District where the Colonial Development Corporation established a large banana project; exports were limited to 38,302 stems valued at \$21,607; production will increase considerably in 1951.

*Coconuts.*

The industry continued to benefit from good market prices but production kept low as a result of previous dry conditions; diseases and pests are also causing losses. There has been some increase in area planted. The total value of exports under this head amounted to \$76,730, with a large proportion of the crop retained for local processing into oil and soap.

*Citrus.*

Exports were as follows:—

Grapefruit .. ..	81,800 cwt.	valued at \$295,692
Oranges .. ..	1,238 cwt.	valued at \$2,466
Grapefruit Juice ..	2,323,355 lb.	valued at \$245,100
Orange juice ..	Nil	

giving a total export value for the industry of \$543,258. Expansion has continued both in the field and the processing plant.

*Sugar Cane.*

A poor crop was made owing to the extreme dry conditions during the 1949 growing season. By the end of the year, however, there were indications of a revival of interest in sugar cane growing on the part of the small and medium farmers.

*Marketing.*

The Marketing Board functioned during the year and gave welcome encouragement to the local food production effort. Loans amounting to over \$50,000 were issued to growers and specified produce was bought at guaranteed prices.

**FISHERIES**

In October a Fishery Officer was appointed after completing an eight months course in England. The aims of a Fishery Policy to be followed are:—

- (a) the conservation of existing stocks of fish to prevent depletion through overfishing or improper fishing methods;
- (b) the carrying out of experimental work for discovering new fishing grounds and otherwise for the development of the industry;
- (c) the improvement of the present methods of fishing and curing of fish for the expansion of the export trade;
- (d) the enforcement of legislation controlling fishing within the Colony;
- (e) to improve the equipment and status of fishermen by fostering co-operation, with division of labour; by credit facilities to enable them to take advantage of improved fishing techniques; and by the provision of amenities; and,



- (f) to keep a check on progress made, and gaps to be filled in by an efficient and reliable collection of statistics, not only quantities and values of fish but of the fishing effort which has been used to catch them.

There are about 150 boats and smacks ranging from 15 to 35 feet, from which some 600 whole-time and part-time fishermen supply the Colony with fresh and salted fish.

During the year the exports of fish were as follows:—

**FISH: Fresh**

Honduras	..	..	..	1,500 lb.	valued at	\$100.00
Mexico	..	..	..	19,561 "	" "	3,335.00
U.S.A. ..	..	..	..	54,610 "	" "	1,854.00
Salvador	..	..	..	900 "	" "	144.00

**FISH: Dried**

Guatemala	..	..	..	1,524 "	" "	114.00
Mexico	..	..	..	1,115 "	" "	178.00
Jamaica	..	..	..	10,284 "	" "	1,184.00
Honduras	..	..	..	3,066 "	" "	303.00

**LOBSTERS: Whole**

Guatemala	..	..	..	7,520 "	" "	962.00
Honduras	..	..	..	10,200 "	" "	1,260.00
Mexico	..	..	..	18,022 "	" "	2,135.00
Salvador	..	..	..	2,075 "	" "	300.00
U.S.A. ..	..	..	..	11,343 "	" "	2,419.00

**LOBSTERS: Tails**

U.S.A. ..	..	..	..	76,755 "	" "	12,245.00
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On the 24th September, 1948, an export duty on fish came into effect. The rates are as follows:—

- (a) Crawfish (commonly known as Crayfish,  
Rock Lobster and Shell Fish)  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pound on gross  
tail weight.
- (b) Whole Crawfish  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent a pound.
- (c) On other fish, whether fresh, salted or  
smoked .. .. . 1 cent a pound.

**FORESTRY**

The principal forest products are:

- (a) Mahogany logs and lumber
- (b) Cedar logs and lumber
- (c) Pine lumber
- (d) Secondary hardwood logs and lumber
- (e) Rosewood sold by the ton
- (f) Chicle and Crown gum
- (g) Cohune kernels
- (h) Firewood and charcoal
- (i) Alligator or skins

The total area of forest lands in the Colony is 8,337 square miles or 93.9 per cent of the total area. It consists of the following types:

I	Mangrove forests	.. .. .	approximately	2.8%
II	Savannahs			
	(a) Brackish water) Wet Savannahs		..	2.7%
	(b) Fresh water )			
	(c) Inland Pine forest			
III	Pine forest		Dry Savannahs	15.4%
IV	High rain forest			
	1. Swamp forest	.. .. .	..	2.3%
	2. Intermediate forest	.. .. .	..	17.9%
	3. Mountain forest)			
	4. Advanced forest)			
	) Advanced forest		..	51.9%
V	Secondary rain forest)			
	(i) High forest )			
	(ii) Existing and recently abandoned cultivation	.. .. .	..	7.0%
Total land area of mainland				100.0%

The timber market continued weak during the first part of the year with regard to mahogany but the demand for chicle and pine revived early and remained strong throughout the year. During the latter part of the year the mahogany market improved.

The demand for pine lumber from Trinidad and Jamaica and some other Caribbean islands was felt from early in the year and continued throughout the year. The export prices for this product were far above the prices fixed for local sales and resulted in a change from an abundance of pine lumber stocks within the Colony at the end of 1949 to an acute shortage.

The dry conditions that prevailed in the previous year were broken by heavy rainfall in June that enabled mahogany logs launched a year ago, and held up at the headwaters of floating streams, to get to mills at the port and to shipping point. With these old logs, most of the current season's logs were also brought down.

A demand for Cedar from Jamaica principally, but from other markets in the Caribbean as well, began to be felt early in the year and continued throughout.

Heavy rains resulted in floods in June which caused some damage to forest nurseries and communications. Due to water logging of extraction roads the sawmilling of pine was held up during the middle of the year at all smaller mills that did not have reserve stocks of logs.

Balsa continued to be shipped to the United Kingdom but at the end of the year the firm importing this timber from British Honduras was temporarily overstocked. Freight rates on this timber previously in force were found

to be incorrect and an appreciable reduction in these rates were made by the end of the year.

The results of the test on pine resin referred to in last year's report were received and proved very satisfactory. These results were obtained too late in the year for any naval stores industry to have started during the year.

## **Chapter VII: Social Services**

### **EDUCATION**

The system of primary education is mainly that of subsidized denominational schools and is controlled by a Board of Education appointed under the Education Ordinance, 1926 (No. 14 of 1926). The Governor is President of the Board and the Colonial Secretary, an ex-officio member. The unofficial members are usually the General Managers of the denominational schools, a representative of the teachers and at least one woman. The Director of Education acts as Secretary. The Education Ordinance is now being revised.

There are 3 government and 87 grant-aided primary schools. There are also 22 unaided primary schools, denominational and private. All primary schools are co-educational with the exception of two in Belize. The ages of enrolment for the purposes of grants-in-aid are 5 to 16.

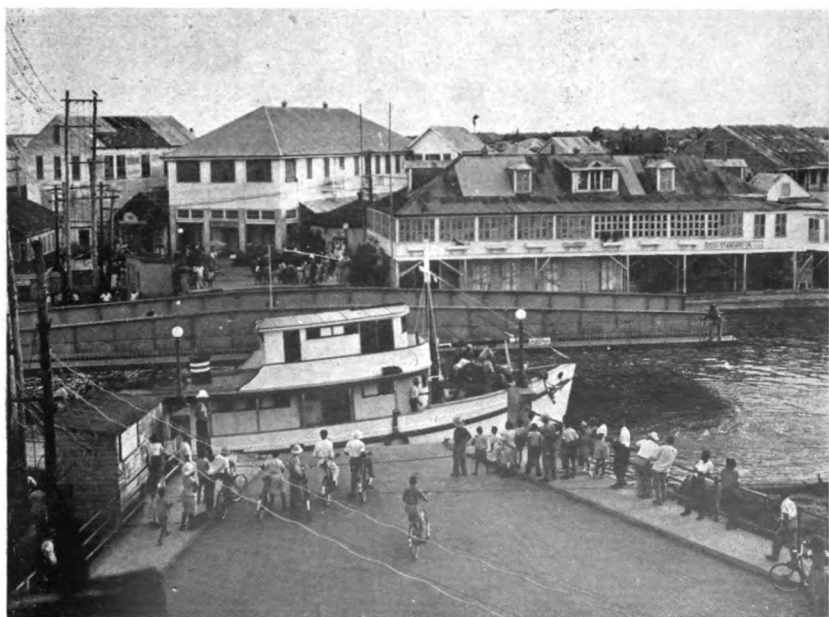
Secondary education is entirely in the hands of the denominations but the Government assists by providing 65 scholarships for pupils from primary schools, each scholarship being tenable for four years though it may be extended for a fifth year with the approval of the Board of Education. There are 5 secondary schools, 2 of which are for boys only, while one is co-educational. All except one have preparatory departments. Teachers are mostly recruited from abroad. The age-range of pupils receiving secondary education proper is 11 to 18. The schools are all situated in Belize.

Vocational education will shortly be put on a better footing with the opening of a Technical High School in Belize in 1951. This has been made possible by a Colonial Development and Welfare grant. Domestic Science is taught to a limited number of girls from the senior classes in primary schools, at a Government centre in Belize. The course lasts for one year. Agriculture is taught in rural schools where the teachers are competent to conduct school gardens. Free grants of the necessary tools are made by the Education Department. Handicraft is taught at two schools in Belize and at a few in the out-districts. There is also in Belize a Handicraft Centre for the training of adults, conducted by the Social Development Department. The only school for juvenile delinquents, the Listowel Boy's Training School, is conducted by the Salvation Army on behalf of the Government.

There is no provision for higher education but the Government awards a University Scholarship bi-annually on the results of the London Matriculation Examination. The University College of the West Indies has appointed a Resident Tutor for extra mural studies. Extra mural classes and classes



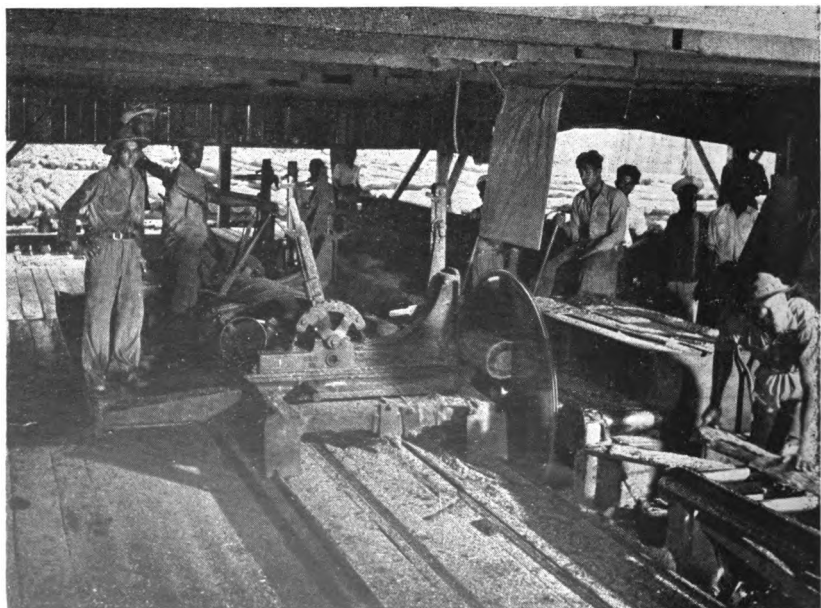
**ANCIENT MAYAN DWELLINGS ARE BEING EXCAVATED ON THE  
BAKING POT ESTATE**



**THE SWING BRIDGE IN THE CENTRE OF BELIZE OPENS TO  
ALLOW A SEA-GOING CRAFT TO PASS THROUGH**



PINE LOGS BEING CARTED BY LORRY FROM PINE RIDGE  
TO THE SAW MILLS AT MANGO CREEK



THE SAW MILL AT MANGO CREEK



THE VILLAGE AT MANGO CREEK WHICH HAS GROWN UP  
AROUND THE SAW MILLS



PINE RIDGE. A HOIST LOADS THE LOGS ON TO A LORRY  
WHICH WILL CARRY THEM TO MANGO CREEK



FOREST WORKERS SAWING A FELLED TREE

conducted in connection with the cooperative movement are the only effective provision for adult education.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen. That the enforcement of compulsion has been a success may be inferred from the fact that the percentage of the average attendance to the enrolment in the Colony is approximately eighty, the highest in the British Caribbean area. Education is not yet free, however, each primary school pupil being expected from long custom, to pay a fee of 5s (3d) per week. Few in fact do so.

An average of 244 certificated teachers and 144 pupil teachers is employed in the primary schools. The majority of the teachers are untrained but since 1941 selected teachers have been sent to training colleges in Jamaica, there being twelve such teachers in training annually. 30 have thus far completed their training and have been posted to schools. The system of Jeanes Supervision initiated in 1937 by means of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, was continued by the Government when the grant was exhausted in 1940. The Supervisors have rendered invaluable service in raising the standard of teaching in the schools.

The position of the teaching profession has been improved with the adoption of enhanced salary scales and the amendment of the Board of Education rules so as to make the profession more attractive to boys and girls with secondary education. The British Honduras Teachers' Federation which was organized in 1939 with constituent associations in the districts, holds an annual conference and makes recommendations to the Board of Education from time to time.

During 1950 two successful vacation courses for teachers were held, the second of which was designed specially for teachers in Maya Indian villages and was a follow-up of a similar course held in May 1949. It marked the third stage of an investigation by the Education Department into the social and educational needs of the Maya Indians. The course was financed under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The Education Department also co-operated in a Caribbean social and educational survey organized by the Caribbean Educational Research Unit.

Arrangements for the feeding of school children formerly undertaken mainly by the Medical Department were greatly extended, thanks to local voluntary effort, to the Red Cross Society and to a grant from the UNICEF Fund. Milk, margarine, cod-liver oil capsules and hot lunches are given to selected children.

The average enrolment of grant-aided primary schools was 11,588 in 1950 and the average attendance 9,597. The average enrolment in the secondary schools (excluding preparatory departments) was 672, and there was an estimated enrolment of 1,278 and average attendance of 950 in non-grant-aided primary schools and preparatory departments of the secondary schools.

For 1950 the total expenditure from the revenue of the Colony was \$267,938.32.



## HEALTH

The vital statistics for the year are as follows:—

Estimated Population	..	..	..	..	..	..	66,892
Number of births	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,657
Birth rate per 1,000 of Population	..	..	..	..	..	..	39.73
Number of deaths from all causes	..	..	..	..	..	..	845
Death rate per 1,000 of Population	..	..	..	..	..	..	12.63
Number of deaths in infants under 1 year of age	..	..	..	..	..	..	284
Infant Mortality rate per 100 live births	..	..	..	..	..	..	106.5

*Malaria.* As in previous years this disease maintains its leading position in the causes of morbidity. 806 cases were admitted to the various hospitals throughout the Colony, representing 11.66% of the total hospital admissions. The comparative figure for 1949 was 14.25%.

As the result of a free grant from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund for a period of two years, an Insect Control Programme was inaugurated. Every house in the Colony was sprayed with a 5% aqueous solution of DDT and it is planned to do this spraying twice annually. It is too early yet to assess the effect on the incidence of malaria of this scheme but it is generally considered that there is a definite decline in the number of insects.

*Typhoid Fever.* Sixty-six sporadic cases were reported with a mortality rate of 9.09% as compared with 60 cases with a mortality rate of 8.3% in 1949. Chloromycetin has proved of great value in the treatment of this disease.

*Tuberculosis.* Forty-nine cases with 34 deaths were reported as against 45 cases with 33 deaths in 1949.

*Venereal Diseases.* The number of attendances at the Venereal Diseases Clinic of the Belize Hospital was 5,473 as compared with 5,388 in 1949. 3,684 bloods were examined by the Kahn test for syphilis; 706 or 19.16% were positive, as compared with 3,231 bloods with 690 or 21.3% positive in 1949.

These figures do not give a true picture of the incidence of syphilis in the population as the bloods were taken from persons attending the Venereal Diseases Clinics or from hospital patients—a very biased sample. More accurate information on the true incidence of this disease is obtained from the results of Kahn tests performed at the Ante-natal Clinics—out of 714 of these tests 8.96% were positive in 1950.

*Medical Staff.* The establishment consists of a Director of Medical Services, a Resident Surgeon, eight Medical Officers, a Matron, a Sister Tutor and a Nursing Sister. Other hospital staff includes a Head Dispenser with two qualified assistants, two Laboratory Technicians a radiographer and a dietitian. There are eighty nurses on the staff or in training. The Health Staff consists of a Senior Sanitary Inspector, eleven Inspectors, an Inspector of Midwives, thirteen Rural Nurses and one Public Health Nurse.

*Hospitals.* There are six hospitals in the Colony, one for each district with a total of 224 beds. The fees range from twenty-five cents a day for fourth class patients to three dollars a day for the first class, but no charges are made for the poor and indigent. There were 3,906 admissions to the Belize hospital in 1950 and to District hospitals 3,004 as compared with 3,398 and 2,903 respectively, in 1949. The Out-patients Department of Belize Hospital recorded 38,267 attendances at the various clinics during the year as against 33,740 in 1949.

*Sanitary Organization.* The scavenging of the city and towns of the Colony is done by the Health Department. The Sanitary Inspectors are responsible for the inspection of all receptacles for the collection of water and for the rigid enforcement of the by-laws governing bakeries, restaurants, hotels and slaughter houses.

The sea and the canals which run through the town of Belize are used by the majority of the householders to dispose their night soil. It is hoped that some drastic measures will be taken in the near future to rid Belize of this most objectionable and unsanitary system. Methods of disposal of night soil in the country villages are very primitive.

#### HOUSING

Belize is a city of wooden houses built on wooden piles. As the city is surrounded by miles of swamp all building sites have to be tilled and raised before building is possible, which has resulted in houses being built very close together even in the better class neighbourhood. The work of filling in pipe-shank from the sea bed and with town refuse is constantly being undertaken by private individuals and by Government. Only a small number of the population live in houses which they own.

Housing conditions elsewhere in the Colony are poor. The principal building medium is locally grown pine with galvanized iron roofing or in the rural districts thatched roofs of local palm leaves.

In all towns and villages there is a definite shortage of housing accommodation, the shortage being most acute in the capital, Belize. There are at present in existence in Belize seven government owned houses which accommodate seven families of the poorer type working class.

The Housing Scheme for Belize by which thirty-three individual houses are to be erected and twenty-two lots leased for building houses with the assistance of the Local Authority has been completed.

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*In the period under review this Department* has changed its name from the Social Welfare Department to the Social Development Department. The Department deals with general Social Welfare work in all its phases, Co-operative Development urban and rural, the Handicraft Centre for the development of the Craft Industry, Community Development Work and supervision of Public Assistance, also supervision of Probation Work and the

Listowel Boys' Training School. The reason for the change in name to Social Development as the general name of the Department is that the word "Welfare" is usually associated with the giving of dole or relief, whereas "Development" is concerned mainly in the scientific and constructive approach to the problems of the people.

*From 1st November, 1949, the Co-operative and Social Welfare Officer was seconded to the Colonial Development Corporation and Mr. S. F. Smith, Assistant Social Welfare Officer, acted until 1st May, 1950, when Mr. A. McNair was appointed as Social Development Officer, Registrar of Co-operative Societies and Registrar of Credit Unions. Mr. McNair is on two years' secondment from the Jamaica Social Welfare Commission which Company he had served for twelve years, dealing mainly with Village and Co-operative work. His primary duty now is the reorganization of the Social Development Department under the new Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme. The plan for the reorganizing of the Department's work was worked out with assistance from the Social Welfare Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare, and the Co-operative Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Legislative Council for the Colony approved the scheme in May and it was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his approval. The scheme was finally approved in August and the old C.D. & W. Scheme 350A ended as from August 31st, and the new C.D. & W. scheme D. 1454 commenced as from 1st September, 1950, with a grant of £28,844 to cover the period up to 31st March, 1956.*

*Between the period May to August, 1950 the Department was preparing for its field and office staff; the existing co-operative societies in the Colony were also contacted and arrangements were made for their audit and bonding of their officers. To date five registered societies were audited and the bonding of nineteen Treasurers of Societies carried out. The present position of the Co-operative Movement in the Colony is as follows:—*

*A. Statistical Report of Credit Unions—December 1950.*

Number of Credit Unions	..	..	..	..	..	17
Membership	..	..	..	..	..	2451
Share Capital—December	..	..	..	..	..	\$3,154.67
Total Share Capital	..	..	..	..	..	76,344.38
Deposits—December	..	..	..	..	..	57.77
Deposits since Inception	..	..	..	..	..	13,156.07
Cash in Bank	..	..	..	..	..	18,019.38
Loans Granted—December	..	..	..	..	..	12,126.10
Loans Issued since Inception	..	..	..	..	..	162,152.17
Loans Repaid—Report of 9 Credit Unions available	..	..	..	..	..	95,649.21
Loans Outstanding	..	..	..	..	..	60,203.93
Interest Received—December	..	..	..	..	..	301.97
Total Interest Received	..	..	..	..	..	9,182.36
Reserve Fund—Report of 9 Credit Unions available	..	..	..	..	..	1,691.13

**B. Consumers Co-operative Societies—December, 1950, 1st year's operations.**

Number	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Membership	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,000
Total Share Capital	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$16,000

**C. Savings Unions Affiliated to the Social Development Department—December 1950, 1st year's operations.**

Number	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Membership	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	300
Total Share Capital	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	\$500

Contacts were made also for the organizing of a Rice Growers Association in the Toledo District, a Steering Committee has been formed for this purpose, and rules are being prepared.

*The period from September to November* has been taken up with the appointing of the Department's staff and an eight-week training course was commenced on the 2nd October. The officers appointed were three Co-operative Field Officers, one Assistant Social Development Officer (Rural) and two clerks. The purpose of the training course was to give the officers, both field and office staff, as detailed a knowledge of the Co-operative Movement as possible, and of the method and techniques of Community Development; as also Handcrafts, Probation and Poor Relief Work. The lecturers consisted of Heads of Departments, the Rev. Fr. Ganey of St. John's College Extension Department, Mr. Stanley Sharp of the Extra Mural Department of the University College of the West Indies and the Social Development Officer.

*The general policy of the Department is clear.* It is concerned with the promotion of creative or constructive social services based on self-help. Its activities are directed to the regeneration of rural life. The methods are based on the Better Village Approach. This is an approach from the bottom up, that is to say, through stimulation or the creation of a desire for self-improvement and a sense of individual responsibility; mutual help by means of organized group action for the improvement of homes, farms, living conditions, Community Planning and action through Community Councils. This stimulation or creation of a desire for Community Betterment leads not only to self-help activities, but to an increased demand for guidance and specialist services. The central theme is, therefore, Community Development through Rural Development Officers.

The resulting community activities may be grouped under two heads, namely the Educational, including Social and Cultural efforts, and the Economic, including Co-operatives, Home Industries, Village Industries, and Building Projects. It is therefore necessary that the Social Development Department should provide the necessary guidance on organizing group activities under these heads (particularly in the early stages) and also to work in close collaboration with all the agencies that are concerned with rural work.

The Department then provides, perhaps, the only common ground on which all agencies and persons may act together to carry through a programme for public welfare, irrespective of differences in religion, politics or social standing. It is therefore most important that this Department should continue and should expand. It is in fact the machinery for the coordination of all efforts, government, professional or voluntary for rural betterment.

*At present the Social Development Department is responsible for the Handcraft Industry which is carried out in Belize, as also Public Assistance, Administration and Social Investigation and Case Work and supervision of Probation Work.*

*With regard to the Handcraft Centre, at the close of 1950 there were 12 persons regularly employed on a piece work basis. The financing of the work of this Centre has taken on a new phase. Previously a grant was given by Government and all monies accruing were paid into General Revenue. Now Government gives a grant of \$750 and all revenues are paid into a deposit account, and are used on a revolving basis to finance the scheme. Receipts paid into this deposit account up to the 31st December, 1950 totalled \$3,251.59. The third course for students since the inception of the Centre started on the 4th July, 1950. Fourteen students took the course which is presently nearing completion. Instructions were given in straw plaiting, jippi jappa weaving, hennequen and wicker work.*

*Work continues at the Poor House where the main pursuit is the making of door mats from coir. Inmates are also on a payment basis. Amenities provided for this institution so far for these goods are a radio and extension, ten bedside tables and two wheel propelled chairs.*

*Public Assistance.* With the approval of the 1950 Estimates the recommendation of the Select Committee for an increase in the allowance to \$1.00 per week throughout the Colony came into force. The rolls have been revised and while the members have not lessened considerably, this is due to the general overall question of unemployment at the beginning of the year.

*Social Investigation and Case Work.* A large number of cases for investigation is conducted by the Department which also serves as a Citizen Advice Bureau and an Exchange for General Social Service Information. Case Work and investigation for the Albert Street Fire was carried out in detail by this Department.

Until March 1951 the Department's Field Staff is undertaking a Sociological and Economic Survey of the villages of the Colony which will be a basis for the future planning of Social Development work in the Colony.

## Chapter VIII: Legislation

The Property Tax Ordinance, 1950.

This Ordinance varies the rates of tax on land other than land in a town and makes provision for the surrender of land to Government if the landowner cannot pay the tax.

**The City Council (Pensions to Specified Officers) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

Any officer to whom a pension is granted may at his option be paid in lieu of such pension, a pension at the rate of three fourths of such pension together with a gratuity equal to ten times the amount of the reduction so made in the pension.

**The Juries (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance makes further provision for exemptions from jury service.

**The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

A new definition of "Pickup", which means a goods or passenger vehicle so designed by the manufacturer the maximum tare weight of which does not exceed 3,360 lb. and which for the purpose of speed limit shall be classed under "Other Vehicles", was enacted by this Ordinance.

Driving permits shall be valid until the 31st December of the year in which such permit was issued.

**The Undesirable Immigrants (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

By this Ordinance the amount \$1,000 security has been substituted for the amount of \$400 for a destitute immigrant.

**The District Commissioners (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

The two Northern Districts of Corozal and Orange Walk were separated by this Ordinance and are now the Corozal District and the Orange Walk District.

**The Minerals (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance deletes the words "provided that he shall not grant a mining right in respect of any area in which minerals have been discovered in apparently payable quantities as a lode formation" in subsection (3) of section 19 of the Minerals Ordinance, 1927. In subsection (1) of section 20 the word "alluvial" is also deleted from the principal Ordinance.

**The Belize City Council (Allowance to Councillors) Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance provides for an allowance to members of the Belize City Council for the first time by a resolution passed by the members of the Council.

**The Chemists and Druggists (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance restricts the sale of poisons to any person under twelve years of age except on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner. It also precludes a person from selling or supplying to any person poisons enumerated in Schedule A of the Ordinance.

**The Belize Property Site Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance was passed to levy a new site tax on properties in Belize and as a result certain properties were excluded from the definition of unoccupied property.

**The Electric Light and Power Ordinance, 1950.**

This Ordinance is to provide for the generation and supply of electricity, the operation of a cold storage plant and the manufacture and sale of ice by a Board to be established. Certain properties and rights were vested in the Board.

**The Public Officers (Building Scheme) Loan Ordinance, 1950.**

The amount previously provided for a building scheme for Public Officers was found inadequate and therefore this Ordinance was passed to provide for raising a loan of \$120,000.

**The Wood Export Duty (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

The Wood Export Duty Ordinance, (Chapter 20 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924) was amended by this Ordinance so as to exempt wood in transit from payment of export duty and also to empower the Governor in Council to make regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Ordinance.

**The Electoral Qualifications and Regulations (Northern Division) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1950.**

As the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts were separated this Ordinance was passed to give effect to the separation.

**The Belize Electricity Loan Ordinance, 1950.**

It was essential to authorize the raising of a loan of \$75,000 for a re-loan to the Electricity Board for the purchase of a generating set and other electrical equipment.

**The Business Regulation (Registration and Transfer) Ordinance, 1950.**

To provide for the registration of firms and persons carrying on business under business names and for controlling the transfer or sale of businesses it was found necessary to introduce this Ordinance in the Colony.

## **Chapter IX: Justice, Police and Prisons**

### **JUSTICE**

The English Common Law and all statutes of the Imperial Parliament 'in abrogation or derogation, or in any way declaratory of the Common Law' passed before 1899 extend to the Colony as far as local circumstances render such extension suitable and subject to modification by Colonial Ordinances.

Petty civil courts (termed 'District Courts') are established in each of the five magisterial districts. Each court is presided over by a Magistrate or District Commissioner who is *ex-officio* judge of the Court.

The jurisdiction is limited to claims not exceeding \$100. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court from any judgment or order of the District Court.

When dealing with cases which can be tried summarily, a Magistrate, District Commissioner or Justice of the Peace exercises jurisdiction under

the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinances, and, subject to these Ordinances, has also the powers, privileges, rights and jurisdiction conferred on Justices of the Peace by the Common Law of England. Appeals from the jurisdiction of Magistrates and District Commissioners lie to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of British Honduras is governed by Chapter 153 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, and is presided over by the Chief Justice. The jurisdiction is the same as that of a High Court of Justice in England. Appeal lies from this Court to the Privy Council. The Court holds quarterly sessions at Belize during January, April, July, and October, and at Corozal similar sessions during March, June, September and December.

The number of civil suits issued in the District Court (Civil Jurisdiction) was 623 and, in addition, there were 8 claims for compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1942. A total of \$1,445.00 was awarded to the dependants of the deceased workmen in 2 of the claims, and a total sum of \$1,888.16 was awarded in the remaining 6 claims for partial incapacity.

The total number of criminal and quasi-criminal cases dealt with in the Summary Courts was 1,676 in Belize and 852 in the out-districts, classified as follows:

	<i>Belize</i>	<i>Districts</i>
Homicide .. .. .	3	2
Offences against the person .. ..	105	86
Offences against property .. .. .	304	65
Malicious injury to Property .. ..	—	1
Praedial larceny .. .. .	12	5
Other crimes .. .. .	19	27
Offences under Labour Laws .. ..	2	4
Offences against Laws relating to Revenue, Municipal Road and Social Economy ..	279	257
Petty offences .. .. .	952	405
	<hr/> 1,676	<hr/> 852

#### POLICE.

*Composition and Distribution.* British Honduras Police consist of a Superintendent, two Assistant Superintendents and one hundred and ninety-nine non-commissioned officers and Constables. One hundred and seventy-three are British Honduraneans and the remainder are from the West Indies or the neighbouring Central American countries.

The Force Headquarters is in Belize and one hundred and twelve non-commissioned officers and Constables are employed in Headquarters and Belize District. The remaining seventy-eight are distributed throughout the country districts. In addition to its normal duties, the Police Force is responsible for Immigration and eighteen non-commissioned officers and Constables are permanently employed on this duty.



In the country districts, Police officers perform the duties of school-attendance officer and postal duties in addition to their normal Police work.

*Training.* As there is no training centre, recruits are trained, under difficulty, at Police Headquarters. Fortunately, the educational standard is reasonably high and there is no language difficulty to overcome. In Headquarters and District Stations, parades and lectures are regularly conducted by the officers and senior N.C.Os.

*Buildings.* Of the twenty-eight Police Stations, eleven have been rebuilt during recent years. During 1950, an imposing new Administration and Police District Headquarters was completed at El Cayo and a new one-man station erected at San Estevan. A programme for rebuilding all the Police Stations is in progress.

*Transport.* The Police control the Prison-Van, Station-Waggon, Saloon-car, Land Rover and seven motor-cycles. With the recent road developments, these transports have proved inadequate and are being increased in 1951.

*Launches and Water Transport.* The Police operate three launches and two out-board motor boats which are used for investigation, immigration and anti-smuggling patrols. Eleven doreys (canoes) are maintained at out-stations and are used on rivers and lagoons which are not navigable by the launches.

*Mounted Branch.* The Force has a mounted strength of twenty-six. Six horses are stationed in Belize for traffic and ceremonial duties and the remainder perform duty in the country districts.

*Crime.* The Total number of offences reported during the year 1950 were 3,193 compared with 3,691 in 1949. Crimes reported showed a decrease of 377. Petty offences—a decrease of 121. The percentage of crimes solved during the year was 45% which is consistent with 1949. There were two cases of murder reported compared with five in 1949 and 233 cases of criminal harm compared with 238 in the previous year. Offences involving larceny decreased from 1,225 to 1,061.

#### PRISONS

The authorized staff of the Prison Department comprises a Superintendent, a Clerk & Storekeeper, a Chief Officer, a Deputy Chief Officer, three Principal Officers, a Matron, thirteen Prison Officers and seven temporary Prison Officers.

The Central Prison is situated in Belize, it consists of 78 cells with a completely separate Female Block of 6 cells. There is a Prison Farm at Gracie Rock to which First Offenders and Young Offenders are sent. This experiment is proving very valuable for the training of prisoners in agricultural work.

Male prisoners undergoing sentences of 3 months or over sentenced in the Districts, are brought to Belize to serve their time and are returned to their

district on completion. Female prisoners sentenced in the districts are brought to Belize to serve their sentences with the exception of those only committed for a certain number of days, this alters with each District having regard to distance, transport difficulties expense etc.

There are 5 District Prisons, one in each District, on an average they accommodate 6 prisoners. These prisons are in charge of the Non-commissioned Officer of Police who is the Keeper of Prisons but is subject to the District Commissioner and Superintendent of Prisons.

The number of persons admitted to all prisons in the Colony during the year was 667, a decrease of 150 in comparison with 1949. This decrease may however be partly offset by the fact that minors are sent to the Listowel School instead of being committed to Corozal Juvenile Prison.

At the Headquarters Prison in Belize the trades of Carpentry, Cabinet-making, Tailoring, Mattress-making, Baking, Shoe-making, Book-binding, Concrete-casting, Fibrecraft and Handicraft are taught. At Gracie Rock Prison Farm, prisoners are trained in agricultural work, with a view to their starting out on their own farm on release.

Short term prisoners are placed in gangs clearing Government lots and the surroundings of Government buildings. Long term prisoners are given industrial training. Female prisoners are mainly used in making Coconut oil for use in the prison. They are also instructed in sewing, tapestry making, embroidery, knitting etc.

A part-time Probation Officer appointed by the Governor attends to the After-care of prisoners.

## Chapter X: Public Utilities.

Public utilities in the Colony are confined to the provision of electricity and telephones. The chief electric power station is operated by the Electricity Board in Belize but the small Town Boards of Corozal and Orange Walk provide electric lighting for their own inhabitants.

The electrical supply system in Belize is three wire direct current, 220 and 110 volts, using overhead lines on poles provided from local pine. Current is supplied by four direct-connected, diesel-driven generating sets of British manufacture, using rotary balancers for the mid-wire. Fuel oil costs twenty-eight cents and lubricating oil ninety-eight cents for each imperial gallon; the total cost of oil in 1950 was \$42,209.00.

Charges for electric current are:

(a) for lighting:

first 50 kw. per kw. ....	15 cents
over 50 kw. per kw. ....	12 cents
all over 100 ..... ..	10 cents

(b) for industrial power:

15 cents to 3 cents per kw.

Consumers number over 2,227.

Ice is manufactured by the Electricity Board by a ten-ton plant of American manufacture and a five-ton plant of British make. Approximate sales of ice during 1950 were 4,357,898 lb. at a rate of half a cent per lb.

#### TELEPHONES

The telephones are of the magneto type of American manufacture. Overhead cables use the poles provided for the electric wires; the airport, which is ten miles from Belize, is connected by means of a metallic circuit. In Belize there are four 150-line manual switchboards but the towns in the districts have smaller equipment. The trunk lines are copperweld single conductors using ground return. They are:

Belize—Maskall, Orange Walk, Corozal, Consejo	..	109	miles
Belize—Roaring Creek, Cayo, Benque Viejo	.. ..	95	„
Belize—Stann Creek, Sittee, Monkey River	.. ..	90	„
Belize—Hill Bank (Belize Estate & Produce Co. Ltd.)		45	„

There were 554 telephones connected to the Belize Exchange and 128 telephones on the trunk lines.

Charges for telephones are:

Business	desk	\$14.00	each quarter
	wall	\$13.50	„ „
Private	desk	\$ 8.50	„ „
	wall	\$ 8.00	„ „
Out-district telephones		\$ 6.00	„ „
			plus cost of each call.

Charges are:

- (a) for inland telegrams: two cents a word with a minimum charge of thirty cents.
- (b) for trunk calls: forty cents for each five-minute period.

## Chapter XI: Communications

Up to a decade ago, almost the only means of communication in the Colony were the sea, the rivers and a number of bush trails. It is inevitable that these means will continue to play an important part in the life of the Colony; they must be used for the transportation of supplies to the settlements on the banks of the rivers, for no road scheme could contemplate linking up all the scattered communities.

#### RIVERS

The Belize River, which has always been the most important for logging purposes, is navigable, almost to the frontier with Guatemala, by doreys and other light craft for the greater part of the year, but, at all times, considerable ingenuity must be exercised to negotiate the numerous 'runs'.

## THE SEA

Coastal villages in Southern Districts are served by a twice-weekly sailing from Belize of a small motor vessel, which, once a week also connects with the port of Puerto Cortes in Honduras to deliver and collect much of the surface foreign mails of the Colony. Regular services are similarly maintained to the Northern District settlements. Ships of the United Fruit Co. transport provisions and merchandise every two or three weeks from New Orleans but the passenger service which operated before the war has not, as yet, been resumed. Small schooners provide a regular weekly service between Belize and the Florida port of Tampa. Ships from the United Kingdom have begun to call at monthly intervals, and there are fortnightly sailings between Jamaica and the Colony. The ships entering the Colony in 1950 numbered 943 with a tonnage of 260,776 compared with 726 in 1949 with a tonnage of 167,875.

Four steamship lines operated to the Colony during the year, particulars being as follows:—

<i>Line</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Frequency of Call</i>
United Fruit Co.	New Orleans, U.S.A.	Monthly
T. & J. Harrison Ltd. London	Liverpool and London	Irregular
Royal Netherlands Steamship Co.	Europe via Cristobal, Puerto Cortez and Puerto Barrios	Monthly
Cayman Island Shipping Co.	Kingston, Jamaica	Fortnightly

Of the above lines only the ships of the Cayman Island Shipping Co. take passengers. Passengers proceeding to the United States and places beyond travel by air. There is regular and frequent communication with the neighbouring Republics. No mail contract has been entered into by any of the lines.

## ROADS

Road-making is a difficult and costly process in most areas; in coastal districts, swamps are the chief obstacle; inland, dense undergrowth is a difficulty. Until roads reach the hills of the interior, where quarries can be opened, stone is not obtainable except by long haulage.

Prior to 1935, there were only thirty-five miles of 'all-weather' roads in the Colony which were considered at that date to be suitable for motor traffic. Today, there are 241 miles of main roads with a further 32 miles under construction, and 71 miles of feeder roads all suitable for motor traffic, with a further 40 miles under construction. In addition there are approximately 48 miles of cart roads, some of which can be used by motor cars during the dry season, and 154 miles of government maintained bush trails.

## AIR SERVICES

The airport for the Colony is located some ten miles north west of Belize, and is listed on World Air Chart No. 645. It was constructed in 1943/44, and

the official name "Stanley Field" marks the association of the late Colonel Oliver Stanley, who as Secretary of State for the Colonies opened the Terminal Building in January, 1945.

Airlines currently operating scheduled services to the Colony are:

British West Indian Airways (BWIA)  
 Servicio Aereo de Honduras, S. A. (SAHSA)  
 Transportes Aereos Centro Americanos, S. A. (In Honduras)  
 (TACA)  
 Transportes Aereos Mexicanos, S. A. (TAMSA)  
 Caribbean International Airways Ltd. (CIA)  
 TACA International Airlines.

BWIA maintained a twice-weekly service on the Belize/Kingston route until November when the flight was reduced to one a week. Lodestar and Viking equipment were used. TACA (Honduras) continue to operate a thrice-weekly service on the Belize/San Pedro Sula/Tegucigalpa route, while SAHSA another airline registered in the Republic of Honduras run a twice-weekly service on the same route with DC-3s. This service was provisionally suspended in July. TAMSA continue their twice-weekly service to Chetumal and Merida using DC-3s. CIA, a newcomer, operate a weekly PBY (Catalina) service to Gran Cayman with onward flights to Tampa, Florida. TACA International Airlines (Salvadoranean Registry) have resumed their trunk service to the United States through the New Orleans gateway, and are operating a weekly service on the New Orleans/Belize/Salvador route with DC-4 equipment. This service marks the bridging of a gap which existed since the company suspended operations in 1948.

TACA (Honduras) made several unscheduled flights to the private landing strip at Mango Creek near Point Placencia in the Stann Creek District which is owned by the Belize Estate & Produce Company Limited.

In addition to the above there were a number of unscheduled passenger and freight flights to the United States (New Orleans & Miami) by charter operators. Largely responsible were Messrs. Challenger Inc. of Miami who are steadily engaged in exporting lobsters to the Florida area.

Aircraft movements amounted to 958, and were slightly less than the previous year (1,036 in 1949). The following figures show, however, that there has been an increase over last year's traffic.

	1949	1950	% Change
Passengers .. .. .	3,515	3,571	+ 1.5%
Mail (Pounds) .. .. .	11,350	13,102	+ 15.4%
Freight (Pounds) .. .. .	109,391	250,037	+ 128.5%

#### POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

There are 34 post offices in the Colony. Facilities for the posting of letters by air travellers are also provided at Stanley Field Airport. In 1950, the number of articles dealt with was 963,711. The value of internal money and postal order business amounted to \$84,540, and to \$108,131 for external transactions.

Telephone offices, which also transact telegraph business, number 72. The local telegraph system is connected by cable across the Rio Hondo with Chetumal, by means of which telegraph business is transacted through Mexico with other countries.

There is a wireless station in Belize for the transaction daily of radio-telegraph business with stations in other countries—Stony Hill, Jamaica; Tegucigalpa, Mexico City, New Orleans and Miami. Transmitting and receiving equipment, which provide aeronautical telecommunications service, are also installed at Stanley Field Airport. Excluding messages relating to the conduct of the service, weather reports, and press messages, 13,092 radio telegrams were transmitted and 11,580 were received in 1950.

Items of news interest and the forecast for the Western Caribbean are broadcast twice daily, at 12.30 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. Central Standard Time, from Radio Belize on 4950 kilocycles.

The charges on radiograms to certain countries are as follows:—

	Ordinary	Letter (LT)	Commonwealth Social (GLT)
<i>Great Britain and Northern Ireland:</i>	\$	\$	\$
<i>via Imperial per word ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.57	.29	—
<i>Eire:</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.57	.29	—
<i>British West Indies:</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.82	.41	—
<i>Bermuda:</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.77	.39	—
<i>British Guiana:</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.82	.41	—
<i>Canada:</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.42	.21	—
<i>Newfoundland.</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.15	.08	.08
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.45	.23	—
<i>United States of America</i>			
<i>via Imperial     ,,    ..</i>	.17	.09	—
<i>via Tropical     ,,    ..</i>	.21	.11	—

Press Telegrams for publication in the newspapers may be sent at reduced rates under special conditions. Urgent Telegrams are accepted at double the charge for Ordinary Telegrams.

## PUBLIC WORKS

Public works other than roads completed during the year included the completion of the El Cayo Administrative Block, the renovation of the former Wireless Superintendent's Quarters, erection of Toll Keeper's Quarters and barrier at Burdon Canal Bridge, erection by methods of prefabrication of San Estevan Police Station and Quarters for Junior Officers in the districts, drainage of Stann Creek Town and minor works including alterations to Government House, drainage of St. Mary's School, gasoline store at the Airport. In addition, fourteen prefabricated houses were erected in the same number of days to house people rendered homeless by the fire of 10th July, 1950, and temporary timber bridge of 75 feet span erected at Middlesex after the main bridge had been washed away in flood. The P.W.D. yard has been greatly enlarged by taking over a part of the Custom Sheds at the Magazine for use as Carpenters Shop and store where buildings for all parts of the Colony are now prefabricated. The main P.W.D. yard is now entirely devoted to plant repair, maintenance and a machine shop.

C.D. & W. projects in hand during the year included the completion of the bridge at Burdon Canal, the commencement of the road from Roaring Creek to Middlesex, the erection of Dispensaries at Barranco and Monkey River, and the continuance of the Feeder Road programme; also the completion of the Agricultural Station buildings at Central Farm, Baking Pot.

## Chapter XII: Lands and Survey

### *Lands and Survey.*

The plotting of the coastal plain from the aerial survey south of the Colony continues. Private estates are being plotted and forest roads and trails are being reduced to the proper scale for plotting on the draft plan which is nearly completed.

A tape survey of the City of Belize was completed towards the middle of the year. The information gathered from this survey has been used in connexion with the valuation of properties within the City limits.

Surveys were carried out at the Central Agricultural Station for village site.

Fifty-five lots on the Housing Site in the Freetown Area were laid out for the Central Authority and 19 lots at Cemetery Road west of Collet Canal in the City of Belize for ex-service-men.

Seventy-seven Fiats and Plans for Grants were issued.

The reconnaissance survey of the Roaring Creek—Middlesex Road was completed towards the middle of the year. Approximately 22 miles of road was located and to do this some 43 miles of reconnaissance and preliminary traverses was carried out. The total distance of the road location from Roaring Creek to Middlesex is 32½ miles.

In the Cadastral field, 70 parcels of agricultural land were surveyed, having an aggregate of approximately 1,400 acres and entailed the demarcation of some 67 miles of boundaries by theodolite and steel tape, 24 miles of compass and tape and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles of road and river traverse; 217 concrete pillars and 127 wooden posts were placed in position to mark the surveys.

In the Cayo District the new town boundaries of Cayo—St. Helena were surveyed and demarcated.

Thirty-four village lots were laid out in the Toledo District.



## PART III

### Chapter I: Geography and Climate

British Honduras, 5,700 miles from the United Kingdom and 600 miles west of its better-known sister colony of Jamaica, lies on the mainland of Central America facing eastwards across the Caribbean Sea. With an area of 8,598 square miles, it is approximately the same size as Wales, and nearly twice the size of Jamaica. The Colony lies between North latitudes of  $18^{\circ} 29' 5''$  and  $15^{\circ} 53' 55''$  and between West longitudes of  $89^{\circ} 9' 22''$  and  $88^{\circ} 10'$ . To the North and North-west, the frontier with Mexico is formed by the River Hondo. The frontier with the only other neighbouring republic, Guatemala, is, in the south, the River Sarstoon from the Gracias a Dios Falls to the sea, while a line drawn from these falls to Garbutt's Falls on the Belize River and thence due North to the Mexican frontier on the Hondo forms the western boundary. The greatest length of the Colony from North to South is about 174 miles with a greatest width from East to West of approximately 68 miles. The coast of British Honduras is very well sheltered from the rough seas of the Caribbean by an almost continuous line of coral reefs and 'cays' lying at distances of from ten to forty miles from the mainland. The harbour of Belize is almost surrounded by sheltering reefs—a factor which has done much to promote the growth of the port as the most important in the Colony. North of Belize, coastal waters are unusually shallow with a general depth of not more than six feet. At Commerce Bight, three miles south of the town of Stann Creek, the deepest water in the Colony is found and until the pier was destroyed by a severe storm in 1941, medium sized, ocean going, vessels were able to berth alongside. For the most part, coastal lands are low and swampy and the northern part of the Colony is flat, large areas of land rising very little above sea level.

In the area south of Belize, there is a central mountain massif of a general elevation of 2,000—3,000 feet above sea level, comprising on the east, the Maya Mountain Range, and on the west, an area of pine ridge over 120 square miles in extent. The Maya Mountains, which include the Cockscomb Spur, possessing a peak of over 3,700 feet, are by no means fully explored, and difficulties of terrain are such as to make expeditions for detailed survey very costly.

The pine ridge provides some of the best scenery in the Colony, and the large tracts of open space suggest attractions for the tourist. Remoteness from rivers and roads would render the extraction of the pine an uneconomic proposition.

Numerous rivers, not all of which are easily navigable by any kind of craft, provided until recent times almost the only means of communication with the interior: the most important, the Belize River, can be negotiated in all but the very dry months by specially constructed motor boats of shallow draught, for 120 miles upstream. No thorough survey of the soil of the Colo-

ny has yet been made but it is believed that there are several uncultivated areas where profitable agriculture could be carried on, and there are similar hopes that a geological survey would not be found unproductive.

#### CLIMATE

In its climate, British Honduras is certainly favoured. Trade winds, blowing from the sea over a great part of the year, keep temperatures down, in coastal areas, to a level below that of such cities as New York and Washington in the summer months. Even in the hotter months of May to October the shade temperatures do not go over 96°. Inland, in the Western District, day temperatures may exceed 100° but cooler nights are experienced. During cold spells, which may occur between November and February, the temperature may go down in Belize to 50° though the mean for this period is nearer 70°.

Rainfall shows some sharp annual variations but the mean over the last five years is sixty-five inches in Belize. Average rainfall in the North was forty-five inches while in the Southern District the yearly average was 186 inches.

The climate of the Colony, which in the cooler months is particularly delightful, is quite suitable for people used to temperate zones and little, if any, impairment to health is suffered from prolonged residence. The high 3,000 feet plateau of the mountain pine ridge is quite suitable as a hill station, a project which may be realized when the major road programme is accomplished.

## Chapter II: History of British Honduras

The incompleteness and the paucity of many of the records from which the history of British Honduras has to be gathered make research fascinating, but, at times, rather exasperating. The humidity of the climate has not favoured the storage of documents, but such as remain provide stories with a Ballantyne flavour of adventure.

Of the early settlement of the Colony by Maya Indians, much remains to be told; but there is ample evidence of considerable Mayan settlements all over the Colony which indicate that a population much greater than that existing at present was supported, though on a much lower standard. For the archaeologist, there is wealth of material to be unearthed.

Here, we are concerned with the history of the Colony following the discoveries in the Western Hemisphere in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Columbus is thought to have sailed down the coast in 1502, when he set out from Cuba to find a passage to the Indies.

The first Britons to set foot in the country are believed to have sailed from Jamaica about 1638. Finding abundant supplies of logwood, then much in demand for the manufacture of dyes in Europe, they began a settle-

ment which was maintained with fluctuating fortunes through 150 years of struggle and strife with the Spanish. It appeared that friendly relations and treaties between Britain and Spain made no difference to the local struggle and it was not until 1798 that an end to the skirmishes could be written.

By 1670 when Spain made a treaty ceding to Britain all lands in the West Indies and in any part of America held by the British, the settlement, near the mouth of the Belize River and at St. George's Cay, an island some ten miles east of the river mouth, included 700 white settlers, among whom was the famous Admiral John Benbow. About this time, the prosperity of the settlement was brought to the notice of King Charles II by a report of the Governor of Jamaica that it had 'increased His Majesty's Customs and the natural commerce more than any of His Majesty's Colonies'.

An early reference to slaves was included in a report of an attack by the Spanish some distance inland at Labouring Creek in 1754, when it was said that, principally by their efforts, the raiders were repulsed. In 1779, the Spanish seem to have had some success when they captured and carried away a great many of the settlers at St. George's Cay. Subsequently, after suffering ill-treatment in Mexico and Cuba, the captives were allowed to return. A further development occurred in 1786, when, by the Treaty of London, Great Britain gave up her claims to the Mosquito Coast in return for Spanish recognition of the existing settlement in British Honduras, but this arrangement seems either not to have been brought to the notice of, or to have been disregarded by, the Spanish in the Caribbean area, as the attacks continued. In their final effort in 1798, they appear to have employed larger forces than ever before and little attention seems to have been given to achieving surprise for the local settlers had time for a number of parleys and to gather together their forces inferior in point of fighting strength. The action at St. George's Cay was decisive and final and, today, the anniversary is honoured by a public holiday accompanied by patriotic celebrations.

Events in Mexico from 1848 to 1867 had their repercussions in British Honduras, for the rebellion of the Indians of Yucatan in 1849 caused many Spaniards to settle in the northern part of the Colony. When in 1867 Mexico finally overthrew the Spanish administration, Indians made repeated raids into the Colony until a garrison of Imperial Troops finally made such incursions unremunerative.

From the very first beginnings of the settlement, until recent times, a greater measure of freedom to manage their own affairs appears to have been accorded to the people of British Honduras than was given to the settlers in other colonies. Until 1786, persons were appointed at an annual public meeting to act as Magistrates, on whom the responsibility of discharging executive and judicial functions devolved.

The King in 1765 gave a 'constitution to the people' founded on their ancient customs, the most important of which were legislating by public meetings and the election of magistrates annually by the free suffrage of the people. Admiral Sir William Burnaby, accompanied by Captain Cook,

was sent to the Colony to codify the laws and customs and to arrange for the inhabitants of the Colony to be put into full possession of their lands and associated rights.

Following the declaration of the settlement as a Colony in 1862, a Lieutenant-Governor, subordinate to the Governor of Jamaica, was appointed, and in 1870 he became the President of a newly constituted Legislative Assembly the composition of which included five official, and not less than four unofficial members.

Independence of Jamaica came in 1884 with the appointment of a Governor and a Commander-in-Chief.

The economic disaster, following a hurricane which overwhelmed Belize and the adjacent countryside in 1931, necessitated the seeking of the aid of the Imperial Exchequer and the subsequent surrender of the control of finance. As a result, major changes in the constitution were made in 1935 by the passing of the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance, 1935, and, after amendments to this Ordinance in 1938 and 1945, the Legislative Council now consists of the Governor, as President, three official and ten unofficial members, of whom four are nominated and six elected from five constituencies. The Governor was given power, in certain circumstances, to assent to any bill which the Council failed to pass.

The main economy of British Honduras has been based, since the first settlement, on her forests. By the time the demand for logwood declined, the mahogany tree had already become a more profitable export and it has remained for a century the principal forest product. Other exports from the forest have centred upon cedar, pine and the sapodilla tree, from which chicle gum is extracted. Coconuts have also been an important export.

With a forest tradition ingrained in him, the average British Honduran has not taken heed of exhortations to settle on the land, and indeed the experiences of some of the settlers have not been encouraging, for most of them have only eked out a meagre living. Bananas were flourishing when the Stann Creek railway project was begun in 1905 to improve transportation, but an imported disease has relegated banana growing to an insignificant position.

The citrus industry in the Stann Creek Valley is now well established and although during the latter half of the war a government subsidy to growers became necessary, due to temporary loss of markets, the original position had been regained toward the end of 1946. A sugar factory, erected in the sugar cane growing area in the northern plain in 1935, has not been productive of a high grade sugar, and it has not supplied, in entirety, the requirements of the Colony. Rum distilleries in the same neighbourhood produce a spirit which has only a local market.

The social development of the peoples of British Honduras has not, on the whole, been characterized by the sudden spurts which appear to have marked progress in other countries; rather, to the casual observer, has it been by almost imperceptible change year by year. The Education Ordinance of 1892

established a Board of Education, with the Governor as Chairman, to promote education, to provide for the administration of schools, and to allot grants in aid from funds voted by the legislature. In 1915 the Governor with the consent of the Board was empowered to declare compulsory school attendance areas. Noteworthy improvements in the standard of teaching recently have followed the provision of better training facilities and stimulation has come from the institution of annual Teachers' Vacation Courses.

Public Health appears to have received its chief impetus in the latter half of the last century, but administrators of the Public Health Ordinances are always somewhat discouraged by the absence of proper water supplies and sewerage systems. An improved water supply for Belize has been installed.

It was not until 1945 that a Social Welfare Officer was appointed, and he was gravely handicapped by the absence of any voluntary organizations on which he could found the nucleus of a Social Welfare Scheme. There were no handicrafts, no co-operative or marketing unions, and no village community centres; but there were Credit Unions, the first of which was established only a short time before he arrived. With the return from Jamaica of an officer sent for handicraft training, handicrafts were introduced to the main institutions, the Prison, the Mental Hospital and the Industrial School for boys, which has been established in the Stann Creek Valley in 1926. With the resignation of the first Social Welfare Officer, a Social Welfare and Development Officer was appointed and social Welfare work was associated with the development of the Colony.

## Chapter III: Administration

The administration and government of the Colony devolve upon the Governor and an Executive Council, constituted by Royal Instructions given in 1936 and in 1945, and providing for three *ex-officio* members and of such persons, as the Governor may appoint in accordance with the instructions. At the close of the year, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary were the *ex-officio* members and there were four other appointments. Appointments are for a period of three years.

The Legislative Council, in its present form, is constituted by the British Honduras Constitution Ordinance of 1935 together with the amendment Ordinance of 1945; the composition, with the Governor as President, being three *ex-officio* members (the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary, and the Attorney General) ten unofficial members of whom four are nominated by the Governor in pursuance of Royal Instructions received in 1936 and 1945, and six elected from five constituencies, there being two members for the Belize District.

All questions are decided by a majority of the votes given, the Governor having an original, and also a casting vote, but of the greatest interest to Un-

official Members of the Council is the provision in the 1935 enactment of what are described as the Governor's reserve powers, which, briefly, give him the authority to declare his assent to any bill, resolution or vote, which he considers necessary in the interests of public order or good government, or to secure detailed control of the finances of the Colony, while financial assistance is being received from His Majesty's Exchequer. In making any such declaration, the Governor is required to inform the Council of his reasons and to report his action to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Governor may refuse to give his assent to any bill passed by the Legislative Council, or he may reserve his assent for the signification of the approval of His Majesty; no law is effective until it has received his assent.

The Judiciary consists of a Chief Justice and a Magistrate for the City of Belize. In the out-districts judicial functions are exercised by the District Commissioners. In addition, two or more Justices of the Peace may exercise the judicial functions of a District Commissioner. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, who is appointed by Letters Patent under the Public Seal of the Colony by the Governor. One of the officers of the Court is the Registrar General, who has power to administer oaths and take solemn declarations, or affirmations in lieu of oaths.

Justices of the Peace are appointed by the Governor by Warrant under his hand and under Public Seal; they may be appointed for the whole Colony, or for a district, or for a portion of a district. Similarly they may be removed by warrant.

Administratively the Colony is divided into five districts, of which the Belize District, containing the capital, has the largest population. The other districts are the Northern with headquarters at Corozal, the Western, whose administrative headquarters are at El Cayo, the Stann Creek District administered from Stann Creek town, and the Toledo District in the South with Punta Gorda as the only important town. The Commissioner for each district, excepting Belize, exercises the prescribed judicial functions and acts, at the same time, as Sub-Treasurer, Sub-Collector of Customs and District Postmaster. Except in one district the Commissioner is also chairman of the local Town Board.

Town Boards are constituted under the District Town Boards Ordinance of 1938, which gives power to the Governor in Council to add to, or delete from, the list of towns to which the Ordinance applies. Boards may be either wholly nominated, or partly nominated and partly elected: nominated members are appointed by the Governor.

A Town Board is required to meet each quarter and at such other times as required by its rules or when convened by the Chairman, who is appointed either by the Governor or from one of their number as he may direct. It is entrusted with the duty of attending to the good government of the town, and it may establish markets, slaughter-houses, baths and washhouses, may provide for public lighting, the naming and numbering of its streets, and carry on such other duties as the Governor orders by notice in the *Gazette*.

## Chapter IV: Weights and Measures

The standard Imperial Weights and Measures are prescribed by the Weights and Measures Ordinance, Chapter 63 of the Consolidated Laws, 1924, which places on the Superintendent of Police the duties of inspection of weights and measures at least once in every three months.

The legal standards to be used are:

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| (a) for articles sold by weight                     | .. .. | Imperial troy and avoirdupois                             |
| (b) for capacity (liquids and dry goods)            |       | Imperial gallon   |
| (c) for capacity (goods usually sold by the bushel) | .. .. | Bushel of eight Imperial gallons or 80 pounds avoirdupois |
| (d) for extension                                   | .. .. | Standard yard measure of 36 inches.                       |

A copy or model of the standards must be kept in the office of each District Commissioner and inspections are to be made at least once in every three months.

## Chapter V: Newspapers and Periodicals

There are two newspapers published in the Colony, the *Daily Clarion*, a small one sheet evening issue and the *Belize Billboard*, a daily issue.

For official purposes, the *Government Gazette* is issued weekly and is available to private subscribers on payment of an annual subscription of five dollars.

There are no other regular publications and, in the main, people of British Honduras rely upon the wireless set and certain weekly American publications for their news of the world.

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**LIST OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT**

**PRINTING OFFICE, BRITISH HONDURAS**

**\$**

1. Agricultural Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	..	.25
2. Customs Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	..	1.00
3. Education Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	..	.25
4. Forestry Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	..	.25
5. Labour Report (Annual)	..	..	..	..	..	..	.25
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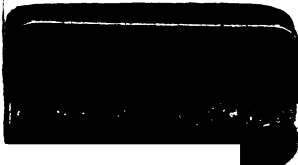


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